

THE SWAPPING DEVICE



ZZZTT

a series by
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Chapter 6

The morning sun spills through my window, painting golden streaks across my tangled sheets as I blink awake. My body feels strange, heavy in all the right places. I stretch, arms reaching high, and my breasts lift with the motion, full and firm, pulling at my chest in a way that's still a shock. The cool air brushes my bare skin, and I glance down, catching the curve of my hips, the smooth dip of my waist, the way my thighs press together under the covers. It's unreal, this body, borrowed from my sister Cindy but tweaked with a few extras: the toned fitness of Emma's boyfriend, the lithe flexibility of that gymnast from yoga, and, well, this sexed-up female form that's been turning heads. I sit up, hair tumbling over my shoulders, and run a hand over my chest, feeling the weight of my breasts. Last night flashes back, my fingers fumbling under the sheets, chasing that first female orgasm. It hit like a wave, raw and electric, leaving me breathless and grinning. It was fun, no doubt, but now? I'm ready to be me again. Mom and Cindy should be home soon, and I can swap back.

I slide out of bed, feet hitting the cold floor, and shuffle to the bathroom. The mirror throws back a sight that's still a jolt: my face, but softer, prettier, framed by wavy, sleep-messed hair. My breasts sway as I move, nipples perking up in the chill, and I can't resist cupping them, marveling at how they fill my hands. Time to get moving, though. I dig through Mom's dresser, snagging a bra that's a size too big but better than nothing. Hooking it on is a struggle, fingers clumsy behind my back, but once it's secure, the support eases the strain on my shoulders. I grab one of my old t-shirts, the fabric stretching tight across my chest, and a pair of sweatpants that hang loose on my hips. It's a weird combo, my guy clothes on this curvy frame, but it'll do for now.

Bending down to grab my phone from the floor, I feel it, that borrowed flexibility kicking in. My body folds effortlessly, no stiffness, no limits. Curiosity takes over, and I plant my hands on the rug, kicking up into a handstand. My legs snap straight above me, steady as hell, even as my breasts flop down, smushing against my face. I laugh into the soft press of them, amazed I can hold this forever. The balance is perfect, muscles humming with power I never had before. I twist into a backbend, then flip onto my feet, landing light as a cat. It's intoxicating, moving like this, every stretch and leap smooth as silk. I could get used to it, but I shake off the thought. Gotta focus.

My phone buzzes, lighting up with a flood of texts from Sam. I open them, and holy hell, he's gone wild. Pics and videos spill across the screen: him squeezing his massive F-cup tits, grinning like a lunatic, one where he's motorboating himself, cackling into the camera. I burst out laughing, heat creeping up my neck as I watch him jiggle and grope, totally shameless. He's a wildcard, always has been, but he's loving this. Maybe I should take a cue from him, loosen up a bit. I grab my own breasts through the bra, giving them a playful squeeze, and snap a quick pic in return. *Come over tonight*, I text. *We'll get you swapped back*.

I'm still chuckling, a little turned on despite myself, when another buzz cuts through. My boss. *You coming in still?* Shit. My stomach drops. I forgot, I've got a shift at the café today. I'm already on thin ice with him, late too many times, and they're short-staffed. I need this job, bad. I glance down at myself, all curves and bounce, and groan. No way I can work like this. I'm still too awkward in this body, every step a reminder of how it jiggles, how it moves. I'd be a mess behind the counter, fumbling cups and tripping over myself. I need to swap back, now.

The front door creaks open downstairs, and relief hits me. Mom and Cindy are back. I dart down, finding them in the kitchen, still swapped from yesterday. Cindy's broad shoulders stretch her blouse, her voice a deep rumble as she gripes about Grandma's driving. Mom's flannel hangs flat on her chest, her usual curves gone. They're chatting, oblivious to their swapped genders, reality bent around them like always.

"Hey, guys," I say, keeping it light. "How was the trip?"

"Fine," Cindy grunts. "Too much pie."

"Glad you're home," Mom adds, her tone gruff in her male voice.

I nod, slipping the swap device from my pocket. "Cool. Uh, hold still a sec." I select "gender" for me and Cindy, then tap the button. A faint hum vibrates the air, and the shift rolls through me. My breasts shrink, my hips narrow, my frame stretches tall and broad again. The familiar weight settles between my legs, and I'm back, male and normal, minus the extra swaps still lingering. Cindy blinks, her chest slightly filling out her top once more, back to her female self apart from Emma's A Cups, none the wiser. She grabs a soda and heads upstairs, leaving me to exhale hard. One down, Sam to go.

"Gotta run to work," I call to Mom, grabbing my keys. "See ya!"

I jog to the café, a few blocks away, slipping in just as the morning rush picks up. The place hums, coffee steaming, customers chatting. I tie on my apron, falling into the rhythm: pouring, wiping, smiling. Jess, my coworker, smirks as I slide behind the counter.

“Almost late again,” she teases.

“Always,” I shoot back, grinning.

The shift drags on, slow and dull, and my mind wanders to the device in my pocket. The power it holds. I scan the room, bored out of my skull, and spot a hot twenty-something sitting alone by the window. She’s cute, dark hair, freckles, nose in a book, with a normal-sized chest under her sweater. Then I see a breastfeeding mom in the corner, her baby fussing, her top stretched over swollen, milk-heavy breasts. A wicked idea sparks. Just for fun, just to watch, I’ll swap them back after.

I select “chest” for both, hit the button, and her sweater pulls tight as her breasts swell, growing full and heavy. Wet patches bloom under the fabric, milk seeping through, but she keeps reading, oblivious, reality shifting for her. I smirk, but I want a better view. Another girl walks in, wearing a tiny camisole, her B-cups modest. I swap their tops quick. The camisole appears on the first girl, clinging to her new, massive chest. Her breasts spill out, barely contained, nipples dark and leaking through the sheer fabric. She adjusts it absently, still lost in her book, and I can’t look away. It’s hot, messed up, and no one else notices.

Twenty minutes later, she closes her book, tucks it under her arm, and heads my way. “Can we talk privately?” she asks, voice low, eyes sharp.

I freeze, pulse jumping. “Uh, yeah, sure.” I lead her to the back, mind racing. Once we’re alone, she cuts straight to it.

“I know you have an artifact,” she says.

My gut twists. “What?”

“A magical item,” she clarifies, pulling a ring from her pocket. “I’ve got one too. This controls minds. I tell someone anything, they believe it.”

I stare, throat dry. “How do you—”

"Name's Lila," she interrupts, slipping the ring on. "There are others like us out there. No one knows where these artifacts come from, but once you claim one, it's yours, tied to you."

"How'd you know I had one?" I manage.

"Saw you at yoga," she says. "You got crazy flexible out of nowhere, swapped with that gymnast. Then your friend's tits blew up as I was leaving the gym. Followed you home, used my ring on your neighbor. Told them to tell me who you were, 'Jamie,' and to text me where you went today, then forget it all."

"You stalked me?" I blurt.

"Had to find you," she shrugs. "Got a text you were here, but I couldn't find the girl from yesterday. Sat down to wait, then boom, my chest's bursting out of my top. Pretended not to notice, but I saw you staring. Figured you'd swapped genders and become a guy."

I blink, processing. "You noticed the swaps?"

"Yeah," she says, gesturing to her leaking breasts. "Artifact owners usually can't affect each other. My ring can't control you or any other artifact owner, and your swaps hit me, but reality doesn't seem to shift for me."

"So you knew your chest changed?"

"Yep. Played it cool, but I knew it was you. Didn't expect it, since usually our artifacts don't work on each other, but your artifact is different, I guess. What do you have, anyway?"

I hesitate, then nod. "Swap device. I've made a lot of swaps, but right now this is the normal me... well, mostly. The girl-thing was temporary."

Lila laughs, bright and easy. "Damn, was hoping for another chick in the club. Oh well."

"Club?"

"Artifact wielders. We're a rare breed."

I lean back, curiosity taking over. "Prove it. Your ring."

"Watch." She strides to the counter, whispers to Jess. Jess blinks, walks over to me, lifts her shirt, and says, "Grab them."

I gape, hands hovering. "Uh."

“Go on,” Lila grins. “She won’t know.”

I touch Jess’s breasts, warm and soft, then pull back fast. Lila whispers again, and Jess lowers her shirt, strolling off like nothing happened.

“See?” Lila says, pocketing the ring. “They believe and do whatever I say.”

“That’s nuts,” I mutter, still flushed.

“Yeah, it’s a blast.” She glances at the clock. “Off soon? Wanna walk and talk more?”

I nod, checking the time. “Ten minutes. Meet you outside?”

“Deal.” She slips out, and I’m left reeling. Mind control, artifacts, a whole world of this stuff. As I finish my shift, excitement buzzes through me.

The café’s buzz softens as I clock out, slinging my apron onto the hook by the counter and slipping out the back door into the salty beach air. Lila’s waiting just beyond the sidewalk, her dark hair shimmering under the afternoon sun, her camisole tee clinging to her curves like a second skin. She catches my eye with that wicked little smirk of hers, the kind that promises she’s already plotting something clever. I’m halfway to her, grinning back, when she stops me dead in my tracks. Her hands slide under her chest, lifting the enormous breasts still straining against the flimsy camisole from the swap I pulled earlier. They’re massive, round and heavy, the fabric stretched taut across them, damp patches blooming where her nipples leak.

“Uh, James?” she says, hefting them up with a mix of amusement and strain, her voice playful but pointed. “These are sexy as hell, sure, but don’t you think it’s time to swap ‘em back?” She shifts her grip, and the weight makes them jiggle slightly, a faint bead of milk escaping to darken the cloth further.

I blink, then burst out laughing, a flush creeping up my neck. “Shit, yeah, sorry. Got so caught up I almost forgot.” My eyes dart back to the café window, scanning the tables. Thank God, the breastfeeding mom’s still there, cradling her baby in the corner. But before I move, I catch Lila inspecting herself, her curiosity taking over. She cups the swollen mounds, fingers sinking into their softness, her brow furrowing as she explores this alien heft. They’re fuller than anything she’s ever carried, the skin taut and smooth, veins faintly visible beneath the

surface. She brushes a thumb over one leaking nipple, wincing as it dribbles more, the sensation clearly strange and new.

“Huh,” she murmurs, tilting her head. “So this is what it’s like. They’re, like, crazy heavy, and this leaking thing? Kinda freaky.” She squeezes gently, and a thin stream arcs out, splattering the pavement. Her eyes widen, a laugh bubbling up. “Okay, I really don’t get why guys lose their minds over these. They’re just... messy and inconvenient!”

I smirk, shrugging as I fish the device from my pocket. “Guess it’s a wiring thing. You’re not built to drool over ‘em like we are.” I select “chest” for her and the mom, then tap the button. A soft *zzzztttt* hums through the air, and Lila’s breasts deflate, shrinking back to their usual modest handfuls. The camisole sags around her frame, the damp spots still clinging but no longer stretched to bursting. She exhales sharply, patting her chest with a relieved grin.

“Much better,” she says, tugging the fabric smooth. “Though, gotta admit, it was kinda wild to feel ‘em bouncing around.” Her gaze flicks to the device, then back to me. “Hey, what about that girl with my sweater? I was kinda digging it.”

I crane my neck, peering back into the café, but the girl in the sweater’s vanished. “Damn, can’t spot her,” I mutter, guilt tugging at me. “Sorry, Lila. She must’ve split. Can’t swap it back without her around. It’s too easy to lose track of these swaps.”

She waves it off, adjusting the camisole with a shrug. “No worries. This thing’s cute enough, and honestly, I didn’t love that sweater anyway. Easy come, easy go.”

I nod, tension easing, and we start strolling down the sidewalk, the beach unfurling beside us. Waves roll in lazily, frothing against the sand, and Lila falls into step, her tone light but laced with that sharp curiosity I’m starting to adore. “So, the club, artifact wielders. There aren’t many of us, you know. We don’t bump into each other often, but I’ve got a friend in it. She’s got this ring that swaps genders, totally flips you from guy to girl or whatever. Wild stuff. Then there’s this other guy with a watch. Press it, and you copy the form of whatever you’re looking at, bird, dog, another person. Lasts an hour, then poof, you’re back to normal.”

“Damn,” I say, mind racing with the possibilities. “That’s some next-level versatility.”

“Yeah, every artifact’s unique, tied to its owner.” She nods at the device in my hand. “Wanna show me how yours works? I’ve seen it in action, but I’m dying to know more.”

I grin, spotting a girl strutting by in a bright red bikini, hips swaying, the fabric barely containing her. “Sure, check this.” I select “clothes” for her and Lila, then hit the button. A

faint buzz ripples out, and Lila's outfit vanishes, tee and jeans replaced by the skimpy bikini. The red scraps hug her curves, barely covering her chest, her ass spilling out the sides in a way that's pure eye candy. She gasps, hands flying to her hips, twisting to gawk at herself.

"Holy shit!" she yelps, laughter edging her shock. "This is... uh, a lot less coverage than I'm used to!" She tugs at the straps, the fabric digging into her skin, and I can't help but admire the view before swapping them back. Her clothes reappear, and she smooths her tee, still chuckling. "Okay, that's a blast. But it's not just clothes and body parts, right? You said it does more?"

"Way more," I say, scanning the crowd. "It can swap abstract stuff too. Watch." I spot a Japanese girl chatting with friends, her accent thick and melodic as she laughs. I select "accent" for her and Lila, then press it. A buzz, and Lila clears her throat, testing her voice.

"Uh, herro?" she says, and it comes out drenched in a heavy Japanese accent, the "I" morphing to an "r," vowels clipped and sharp. "What the... oh my God, James! I sound rike anime girrr!" She claps a hand over her mouth, eyes wide, then tries again. "This is so weiwd! I can't speak norma-ree!"

I double over laughing, her thick accent turning every word into a cartoonish twist. "You totally do! Say something else!"

She grins, leaning into it. "Okay, risten! I ruv this, but it's so hawd to tawk!" Her English is flawless, but the accent mangles it, making her sound like she's straight out of Tokyo. "Swap it back, prease! Before I roose my mind!"

"Don't worry," I say, tracking the Japanese girl to make sure she doesn't vanish. "Got you." I hit the button again, and Lila's voice snaps back to normal mid-sentence.

"—lose my mind," she finishes, blinking. "Whoa, that was nuts. Your device is unreal."

"Yeah, it's got some range," I say, pocketing it. "But let's push it further. You said guys are obsessed with boobs, right? Check this." I spot a dude lounging on the sand, openly ogling a group of girls walking by, his eyes glued to their chests. I select "attraction to boobs" for him and Lila, then tap it. The buzz hums, and Lila freezes, her gaze snapping to a woman strolling past in a low-cut top.

"Oh... wow," Lila breathes, her voice dropping low and husky. She steps closer, almost involuntary, her eyes locked on the woman's cleavage, full and bouncing faintly with each step. "I, uh, I get it now. These are... incredible." She bites her lip, hands twitching like she

wants to reach out, a flush creeping up her cheeks. "James, what did you do? I can't stop staring. They're so round, so soft-looking, I just wanna..." She trails off, catching herself, and laughs nervously. "Okay, this is intense. I'm, like, drooling over here!"

I grin, letting it play out. She circles the woman, who's oblivious, sipping a drink by a vendor. Lila's practically hypnotized, muttering, "God, they're perfect. How do they even stay up like that? I need to know what they feel like." She stops, shaking her head hard. "Alright, swap it back. This is too much. I'm turning into a creep!"

Laughing, I hit the button, and her posture relaxes, the hungry edge fading from her eyes. "Better?" I ask.

"Much," she says, fanning herself. "That was wild. I totally get the hype now, though. Props to you guys for functioning with that level of distraction."

We're both cracking up now, the testing a giddy rush. "Okay, my turn," I say. "Lemme try that ring."

She smirks, slipping it off and handing it over. "Go nuts." I slide it on, the metal cool against my skin, and scan the beach. A guy's sprawled on a towel, scrolling his phone. I stroll up, leaning down. "Jump twice," I say, calm and firm.

He blinks, baffled, then hops up, bouncing twice before plopping back down. "What the hell?" he mutters, scratching his head.

I stifle a laugh, already moving on. Near the water, a bikini model's posing for a photoshoot, her body a vision, long legs, flat stomach, curves that could stop traffic. My pulse kicks up as I approach, leaning in close. "You're in love with me. Forget I said this to you," I whisper.

She turns, her eyes locking on mine, and a slow, dreamy smile curves her lips. "Hey," she says, voice soft and breathy, stepping closer. "I don't know why, but I feel like I've been waiting for you all day." Her hand brushes my arm, light but electric, and she tilts her head, hair cascading over one shoulder. "You're... amazing."

I swallow hard, heat flooding me. "Uh, yeah. Wanna grab a drink?"

"Absolutely," she purrs, pressing closer, her perfume sweet and dizzying. "Wherever you want, I'm there."

I glance at Lila, who's watching with raised brows, clearly entertained. Grinning, I turn back to the model. "Actually, scratch that. You're not in love with me anymore. Forget I said anything."

Her face shifts, confusion flickering. "Wait, what? I don't..." She blinks, shakes her head, and wanders back to her shoot, leaving me chuckling as I slip the ring off and hand it to Lila.

"That was insane," I say, still buzzing. "You weren't kidding about it being a trip."

"Yeah," she says, pocketing it with a grin. "You get used to the chaos." We lapse into a comfortable silence, walking along the shore, waves crashing beside us. The sun's dipping lower, casting gold across the sand, and I feel the weight of it all, the device, the ring, this secret world unfolding.

The afternoon sun beats down on the boardwalk, a salty breeze tugging at my hair as Lila and I wander past the bustling stalls. We've been messing with the swapping device all day, trading heights with a lanky surfer, then voices with a pair of giggling teens. My pocket buzzes faintly with the device's energy, a constant reminder of the wild possibilities it holds. Lila's mid-rant about how the surfer's long legs made her trip over her own feet when she stops abruptly, her eyes narrowing with that telltale spark of mischief. Before I can protest, she snags the device from my hand, her fingers quick and nimble, and aims it square at me.

"Lila, what are you—" I start, but the words cut off as a familiar tingle races through me. My body shifts fast. My chest swells, breasts pushing against my shirt, full and heavy. My hips flare out, jeans hugging a sudden curve, and the weight between my legs vanishes, replaced by a warm, unfamiliar slickness. I shrink a little, my frame softening into something undeniably female. I blink, adjusting to the sensation, my voice pitching higher as I mutter, "Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

Lila's gasp pulls my attention. She's staring at me, wide-eyed, her mouth hanging open. "Holy crap, James. You're... you're hot!" she says, her voice cracking slightly. But then her gaze drops to herself, and her shock doubles. Her own body has transformed. Her shoulders broaden, stretching her tank top tight across a flat, muscled chest. Her arms thicken, hands growing larger, and a bulge presses against her shorts. She stumbles back a step, patting her new frame, her voice dropping to a deep rumble. "I'm a freaking dude!"

I can't hold it in. Laughter bursts out of me, bright and feminine, ringing over the crash of the waves. "Yeah, welcome to my world," I say, crossing my arms under my new chest, feeling the odd weight settle. "First time's always a trip, huh?"

She, or he now, stares down at herself, hands hovering over her crotch like she's not sure what to do with it. "This is insane. It's... heavy. And weird. Like, there's stuff just hanging there!" She shifts her hips, grimacing as she adjusts the bulge, then runs a hand over her stubbled jaw. "And my face feels scratchy. How do you deal with this all the time?" Her eyes flick to her broader shoulders, then her thicker fingers, flexing them like she's testing a new toy.

"You get used to it," I say, grinning. "Though you're taking it better than most. First time I swapped, I nearly fell over trying to walk." She looks ridiculous, all wide-eyed and awkward in her new male form, handsome but clearly out of her depth. It's hilarious, watching someone else stumble through the chaos I've gotten so comfortable with.

Lila huffs a laugh, the sound deep and booming, then grabs the device again. "Alright, fun's over. Let's switch back before I accidentally break something." She taps the button, and the buzz ripples through us once more. My body snaps back to normal, chest flattening, hips narrowing, the familiar weight returning below. Lila's back too, her curves restored, patting her chest with a relieved sigh. "Okay, that's better. Though the height was kinda cool."

I chuckle, but the air shifts as she steps closer, her movements slower now, deliberate. Her eyes lock on mine, a playful heat simmering in them. She tucks a strand of hair behind her ear, her voice dropping low and suggestive. "You know, James, we could have some real fun with this thing. Like, really mess around. Swap stuff and see where it takes us." She pauses, biting her lip, the implication clear as day. "No one would have to know."

My throat tightens, a flush creeping up my neck. "Lila, I've got a girlfriend. Emma. I can't do that. Sorry."

She shrugs, unfazed, her smile easy but persistent. "Come on, we're artifact owners. That's special, right? We've got to stick together. And your girlfriend? She'd never find out. Think about it. How often do you get to mix magic and sex? We could swap genitals, feel what it's like from the other side. I tried that once with my friend's swap ring, but it only works on the wearer. With your device, we could both swap. Both feel it."

I laugh, the sound a little shaky, because damn, it does sound tempting. "Look, I won't lie, that sounds fun. Really fun. But I love Emma. I can't cheat on her. Even if she wouldn't know,

it's not right. I know I can't experiment with her the same way. Unless she's holding the remote, she won't even see the changes. She doesn't even know about it, and to be honest I don't know if I want to tell her, but still. I love her."

Lila nods, her expression softening, respect flickering in her eyes. "Fair enough. I get it. Friends it is, then." But before I can relax, she snatches the device back with a wicked grin. "Doesn't mean I can't mess with you a little, though." She spins, aiming at a curvy girl lounging on a bench nearby, her bikini top straining under an enormous chest. A quick tap, and Lila's tank stretches tight as her breasts balloon out, massive and heavy, spilling over the fabric. She cups them, smirking. "Check out these mommy milkers, James. Look what you're missing out on."

I burst out laughing, the sight too absurd to resist. "You're ridiculous," I say, grabbing the device and swapping her back. Her chest shrinks to normal, and she adjusts her top with a mock pout. "Relentless, though."

"Gotta keep you entertained," she shoots back, winking. The tension eases, settling into something lighter, friendlier. We stand there a moment, the boardwalk humming around us, and I glance at my watch. "Hey, me, Sam, Emma, and some friends are grabbing drinks later tonight. You should come. It'll be a good time."

Her face lights up. "Oh, I'm in. Text me the spot?"

"Done," I say, and with a quick wave, she heads off, her stride confident, a bounce in her step. I watch her go, a grin tugging at my lips. The day's been wild, full of swaps and close calls, but it's left me buzzing with something new. Friendship, maybe, with a side of magic-fueled mischief. Tonight, with drinks and the crew, who knows what'll happen next? For now, I pocket the device and turn toward home, the promise of more chaos lingering like the fading sunlight. Sam's probably on his way to mine, and I gotta swap his gender back with mom before we all head out tonight.

Chapter 7

The late afternoon sun filters through the blinds, painting the living room in soft golden stripes as I slouch on the couch, scrolling aimlessly on my phone. The house feels too still, too quiet, and I'm doing everything I can to avoid the kitchen. That's where Mom is, or rather, the man who used to be Mom, clattering around with dishes. It's beyond strange hearing that

low, gravelly voice muttering to itself over the sink. My mom as a dude. Every time I think about it, my skin crawls. I've swapped genders myself plenty of times now, but this? This is personal. Too personal. I'd fix it in a heartbeat if Sam would just hurry up and get here with that damn device. Until then, I'm stuck, marooned in this awkward reality.

I let out a groan and toss my phone onto the cushion beside me, rubbing my eyes. The swapping device sits on the coffee table, its smooth surface glinting in the light, practically daring me to touch it. But I'm not that reckless anymore. Not after the mess with Sam and that gym girl. I still can't wrap my head around how he's out there, strutting around with those enormous breasts and loving every second of it. A reluctant smirk tugs at my lips. Sam's always been unhinged, but this takes it to a whole new level.

The front door swings open, and I straighten up, a wave of relief hitting me as Sam saunters in. He's a walking contradiction, his broad shoulders and cocky grin clashing with the high-pitched voice and the unmistakable bounce of his chest. Those F-cup breasts stretch his shirt to its limits, swaying with every step. He catches me staring and flashes a toothy grin, cupping them proudly. "What's up, James? Been missing your best girl?"

I roll my eyes, but a laugh slips out anyway. "You're an idiot."

"A hot idiot," he corrects, dropping onto the couch next to me. His voice is still feminine, lilting and bright, but there's a swagger to it now, like he's fully embraced this body. He props his feet on the coffee table, his chest jiggling with the motion. "You wouldn't believe the day I've had. This body's a total game-changer."

"Alright, let's hear it," I say, leaning back and crossing my arms. "What's the great Sam been up to?"

His eyes light up, and he leans in close, like he's about to spill some grand conspiracy. "Okay, so first, I hit the park. Found this tight little crop top in your sister's room, don't freak out, I'll wash it. Anyway, I'm walking around, tits practically popping out, and every dude's head is turning. Got free ice cream from some guy who couldn't stop staring. Then I went shopping. Flirted with a cashier, boom, ten percent off. Being a girl's like having cheat codes for life."

I snort, shaking my head. "You're unbelievable."

"Unbelievably awesome," he says, grinning. "Oh, and you should try it, man. Being a chick is wild. You'd love it."

I blink, thrown off. "Wait, what?"

"Yeah," he says, nodding eagerly. "You should swap with someone. It's a blast. I mean, I got swapped with your mom, right? And it's been insane. You'd get a kick out of it."

I stare at him, my brain grinding to a halt. "Sam, hold up. You think I haven't been swapped?"

He frowns, tilting his head. "Uh, no? It was just me and your mom, wasn't it? You've been a dude this whole time."

A lightbulb flicks on in my head, and I groan, dragging a hand down my face. Of course. The device. "Sam, you weren't touching the remote when I swapped back into a guy, were you?"

He scratches his chin, thinking. "Nope. Why?"

"Because," I say, leaning forward, "when you're not touching it during a swap, reality shifts for you. You don't remember me turning into a girl because, in your head, it never happened. But I was a girl, Sam. Same time as you. We were both swapped."

His jaw drops, and then he bursts out laughing, slapping his knee. "No way! You were a chick too? That's nuts! This remote's fucking wild, man. What was it like?"

I shrug, a little thrown by his enthusiasm. "Weird. Fun for a bit, but mostly weird. Point is, you've got no memory of it because of how the device works. It rewrites shit for anyone not in on the swap."

Sam's still chuckling, shaking his head. "That's the coolest thing I've ever heard. We've got a reality-bending toy, and I'm out here living my best life. You've got to admit, that's badass."

"Yeah, sure," I say, half-smiling despite myself. "But speaking of that, you ready to swap back? I need my mom to be a woman again. It's creeping me out having a man-mom in there."

Sam's grin fades, and he slumps back, pouting. "Aw, man. Do I have to? I'm kinda loving this. Being a girl's awesome." He grabs his breasts, hoisting them up for emphasis. "Look at these! They're perfect. I could stay like this forever."

I sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose. "Sam, come on. I get it, you're having a blast. But my mom's a dude because of you. I can't live like this. Swap back, please."

He huffs, crossing his arms under his chest, which only makes his boobs more pronounced. "Fine, fine. But I'm gonna miss this."

"Good," I say, grabbing the device. "Hold on to it this time, okay? I want you to remember everything." He nods, wrapping his hand around the remote as I aim it at him. A quick press of the button, a faint hum, and the swap kicks in. I feel a shiver as the energy ripples through us. When it settles, Sam's voice drops back to its usual gruff tone, his frame bulking up to its old shape. I glance toward the kitchen, relieved to hear Mom's voice shift back to her familiar alto, humming away like nothing's wrong.

"Done," I say, setting the device down. "Mom's back to normal. You good?"

Sam stretches, rolling his shoulders. "Yeah, feels weird being a guy again. But—wait a sec." He looks down, and his eyes widen. "Holy shit, James."

I follow his gaze, and my stomach flips. His shirt's still tight, stretched across a pair of massive breasts that definitely shouldn't be there. "What the hell?" I mutter, staring. "You're a guy again. Why do you still have those?"

Sam tugs at his shirt, pulling it up to reveal those same F-cups, heavy and round, sitting proudly on his male chest. He jiggles them, grinning. "Oh my God, it's from the gym girl! You swapped my tits with hers, remember?"

My mind races back to that chaotic moment, and it clicks. "Shit. Just like when Cindy's boyfriend's fitness stuck with me through swaps. The traits stack if you don't undo them right away."

Sam laughs, loud and triumphant. "This is amazing! I'm a dude again, but I've got my own rack to play with!"

I groan, rubbing my temples. "Sam, this is a problem. You can't stay like that."

"Why not?" he asks, still grinning. "Will anyone notice? I mean, reality shifted, right?"

I hesitate, then nod. "Yeah, for everyone else, you've always been a guy with huge tits. But we remember because we were touching the remote this time. Still, it's weird. I don't want you stuck like this forever."

Sam shrugs, unfazed. "Then we'll find someone to swap with later. For now, I'm keeping them. This is too good to pass up. Come on, James, let me enjoy it."

I sigh, torn between worry and amusement. "Fine. For now. But we're fixing this eventually. What a mess."

He claps me on the shoulder, his chest bouncing with the motion. "Deal. Now, let's get ready. We're meeting Emma and the crew at the bar, right?"

"Yeah," I say, standing up. "In an hour."

Sam hops to his feet, his breasts swaying wildly, and I can't help but laugh. "You're gonna need a bigger shirt, man. That one's screaming for mercy."

He glances down, tugging at the fabric. "Good point. Got anything?"

I smirk, heading for my room. "Maybe. Come on." I dig out an old hoodie, tossing it to him. It's loose on me, but on him, it hugs his chest tight, barely containing the cleavage spilling out the top. He zips it halfway, grinning at his reflection. "Good enough. I look like a badass."

"More like a freakshow," I mutter, pulling on a clean shirt. "Let's go."

We slip downstairs, dodging the kitchen where Mom's back to her old self, oblivious to the chaos. I feel a twinge of guilt, but it's drowned out by the absurdity of Sam's new look. Drinks with friends might be just what I need to shake this off. Or at least distract me from the madness until we figure out what's next.

The Mercedes purrs as I ease it out of the driveway, the engine's low rumble cutting through the evening quiet. Sam's sprawled in the passenger seat, his broad frame dwarfing the leather upholstery. He's wearing a hoodie I lent him, but it's doing a piss-poor job of containing his chest. Every bump in the road sends those massive tits jiggling, the seatbelt carving a deep valley between them. He catches me looking and grins, all teeth and mischief, one hand tugging at the strap like he's putting on a show.

"Quit playing with them," I mutter, flicking my eyes back to the road.

"Can't help it," he says, voice brimming with glee. "They're just there, you know? All the time. It's fucking awesome."

I shake my head, pulling into the bar's parking lot. The neon sign buzzes overhead, washing the asphalt in a patchy red glow. Sam's still adjusting himself as we climb out, and I swear he's walking with an extra bounce just to mess with me. Inside, the bar's alive, a mess of

clinking glasses and overlapping voices. The air's thick with the smell of spilled beer and greasy fries. Emma's already there, perched on a barstool near the counter, her back to us. Even from here, I can see how her shirt clings to her chest, Cindy's C-cups filling it out in a way that still throws me off. She doesn't know they're not hers, swapped without a trace, and neither does anyone else. Reality's rewritten itself, and I'm the only one who remembers.

She spins around as we get close, her face lighting up. "Hey, you," she says, hopping off the stool. She leans in, planting a quick kiss on my lips, soft and familiar. Her eyes slide to Sam, and a smirk tugs at her mouth. "Nice cleavage, Sam. Really working that hoodie."

Sam puffs out his chest, proud as hell. "Thanks, Em. Gotta show off the goods, right?"

I roll my eyes, but it's bizarre how casual she is about it. To her, Sam's always been a guy with tits, like it's no big deal. We slide into a booth tucked in the corner, the worn leather creaking under us. The night picks up steam as a few friends trickle in. First there's Jake, tall and lanky with a scruffy jaw that's perpetually stuck at five o'clock. He's got a dumb grin and a knack for bad jokes. Then Mia, short and sharp, her laugh loud enough to pierce the bar's hum. Alex rolls in last of the early crew, quiet but watchful, sipping a beer with a half-smile that says he's clocking everything.

Lila shows up late, slipping through the door like she owns the place. She's in a tight black top and jeans, dark hair spilling over her shoulders, and she catches my eye with a sly grin. I wave her over, introducing her as an old friend I ran into. "Guys, this is Lila," I say, gesturing around the table. "Lila, this is Jake, Mia, Alex, and you've sort of met Sam and Emma." She slides in next to me, her presence sharp and electric, and the group folds her in easy. Drinks flow, stories bounce around, and the chatter's loud and loose. But every so often, I catch Lila's eyes drifting to Sam's chest, her brow quirking like she's piecing something together. I shake my head, mouthing *later* when no one's looking.

The night rolls on, and at one point, Emma excuses herself to the bathroom, sliding out of the booth with a quick squeeze of my hand. Lila seizes the moment, leaning in close, her voice dropping low and conspiratorial. "Alright, spill. What's the deal with Sam's tits?"

I sigh, swirling the ice in my drink. "It's a mess. Those tits are from a gym swap, some chick he traded with. He's stuck with them until we find someone to trade back."

Lila laughs, her eyes glinting. "That's insane. And he's loving it, huh?"

We both glance over at Sam. He's halfway across the room, surrounded by Jake and Alex, proudly unzipping his hoodie. His cleavage spills out, and Jake's eyes go wide. He reaches

out, hesitant, then gives one breast a quick squeeze. “Dude, these are real? How’d you get so lucky?”

Sam grins, thrusting his chest forward. “Just born this way, man. Jealous?”

Alex chuckles, shaking his head. “Never seen anything like it. You’re a freak, Sam.”

I groan, leaning back in the booth. “He’s acting like he grew them yesterday. But to them, he’s always had them. He’s not even thinking about how weird this looks, showing them off like that.”

Lila nudges me, her tone steady. “Hey, relax. It’s his problem. He wanted this, remember? He’ll get sick of it soon enough and come begging you to swap him back a male chest. Don’t stress.”

I take a sip, then pivot. “Speaking of artifacts, let’s talk about your ring. You said you’d give me more examples.”

Her smirk widens, and she leans in closer. “Oh, it’s fun at first. You can make anyone believe or do anything, no limits. I’ve had people dancing in the street, confessing secrets, you name it. There’s no challenge, which means no thrill after a while. Still, it’s got its perks.”

I’m hooked, leaning forward. “Fascinating. Let’s see it in action again.”

She glances around, then nods toward Sam. “Let’s use him. He’s already in on the artifact stuff.”

“Yeah,” I say. “He’ll be game. Call him over.”

Lila raises her voice, cutting through the noise. “Hey, Sam! Come here a sec.”

Sam breaks away from the guys, his chest bouncing as he strides over. Jake’s still staring, half-dazed, and Alex just shakes his head. “What’s up?” Sam asks, sliding up to our booth.

I lean in, keeping my voice low. “Sam, Lila knows about the device. She’s got her own artifact, a ring that lets her control minds. And get this, she can see through the swaps without touching the device, like me.”

His jaw drops, eyes lighting up. “No way! That’s awesome! What do you think of my tits, Lila? Pretty sweet, right?”

She laughs, shaking her head. “They’re something, alright. James says you’re loving them.”

“Hell yeah,” he says, grinning wide. “Best thing ever.”

I cut in. “We were thinking of using you to demo her ring. You cool with that?”

His grin stretches wider. “Fuck yeah! This artifact shit is sexy as hell. Let’s do it.”

Lila slips the ring onto her finger, her expression turning playful. “Alright, let’s start small. Sam, you can’t speak.”

Sam opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. His eyes go wide, and he tries again, lips moving in silence. He looks at me, panicked, hands flailing like he’s mime-trapped. I stifle a laugh, and Lila smirks. “Okay, now you can speak, but only like a horned-up bimbo.”

His voice kicks back in, but when he tries to say, “What the hell?” it comes out as, “Like, oh my gawd, what’s happening to me?” in this breathy, over-the-top tone. He claps a hand over his mouth, horrified. “Wait, no! I mean, this is, like, totally not cool!” He’s fighting to sound normal, but every word’s dripping with that ditzy, flirty lilt. “James, make her stop! This is, like, so embarrassing!”

I’m doubled over, laughing so hard my sides hurt. “Oh my God, Sam, you sound ridiculous.”

Lila’s grinning too, clearly having a blast. “Alright, you can speak normally now.” His voice snaps back mid-sentence, and he exhales hard.

“—so not funny,” he finishes, gruff again. “That was weird as hell.”

Lila’s not done. “Let’s up it a notch. Sam, you’re fully in love with me.”

His face shifts instantly, eyes softening as he stares at Lila like she hung the moon. “Lila,” he says, voice thick with longing, “I don’t know why, but I’m crazy about you. You’re amazing.” He steps closer, reaching for her hand. “Wanna get out of here? Just you and me?”

Lila laughs, pulling back. “Easy, tiger. You’re back to normal now.”

Sam blinks, the haze clearing. “Whoa. That was intense. And kinda uncomfortable.” He chuckles, shaking his head. “Alright, I’m heading back to the guys. You two are dangerous.” He wanders off, still glancing at his chest like he’s not sure what hit him.

Emma slides back into the booth just then, fresh from the bathroom, smiling easy. “What’d I miss?”

Before I can answer, Lila winks at me, slipping the ring back on. My stomach flips, but I keep my mouth shut, curious. She leans toward Emma, voice casual. "Hey, Emma, you don't care if we feel you up, right? Nothing about your body's off limits to us."

Emma blinks, then nods, totally unfazed. "Yeah, sure. Go for it."

My jaw drops. "Lila, what the hell?"

Lila reaches out, sliding her hand under Emma's top, groping her breast with a grin. "Nice tits, Em. Perky."

Emma smiles, taking it like a compliment. "Thanks! James likes them too."

Lila's hand drifts lower, brushing over Emma's crotch through her pants. Emma shudders, giggling. "Whoa, I know nothing's off limits, but that's a little sensitive, Lila!"

Lila smirks. "Don't be silly. Us touching your pussy is calming and comforting."

Emma's tension melts away instantly, her body easing into it. "Oh, yeah, you're right. That feels nice."

I'm stunned, watching this play out. Lila's ring is unreal, bending Emma's mind like it's nothing. She catches my eye, playful but sharp. "Impressed?"

"Uh, yeah," I mutter, still reeling. "That's a lot."

Lila's not finished. She leans in again. "Emma, act and think like a horny guy. Forget I said that."

Emma's posture shifts on a dime. She slouches back, legs spreading wide, one hand resting lazy on her thigh. When she speaks, her voice is the same, but the tone's rougher, blunt.

"Man, this beer's good. You guys see the game last night?"

I blink, thrown. "Uh, no. Which one?"

She shrugs, swigging her drink. "Doesn't matter. Sports are sports." Her eyes flick to a girl walking by, lingering on her ass. "Damn, check that out. I'd hit that."

Lila stifles a laugh, and I can't help but join in. Emma's a total dude now, all broad gestures and crude edge. She's still herself, still knows she's a woman, but her attitude's flipped. To her, this is normal, always has been. Jake and Mia wander back over, and Emma slaps Jake

on the back, hard enough to make him stumble. “Yo, man, you still owe me that ten bucks from last week.”

Jake frowns, rubbing his shoulder. “Uh, what? I don’t remember that.”

Emma scoffs. “Don’t play dumb. Pay up, dude.”

Mia’s watching, brow furrowed. “Emma, you alright? You’re acting weird.”

Emma waves her off. “I’m fine. Just being me.” She leans back, tugging at her shirt, and for a second, I swear she’s checking out her own chest like it’s new territory.

Lila nudges me, whispering, “See? Total dude-brain.”

I nod, half-amazed, half-unsettled. “Your ring’s something else.”

“Yeah,” she says, slipping it off with a grin. “Keeps things interesting.”

Lila commands Emma back to normal and Emma leaves to join the rest of the crew. “This is all so wild.” I say to Lila.

Lila's POV - A couple hours later

The bar buzzes around me, a low hum of chatter and clinking glasses, but my focus is locked on James. He’s sprawled across the booth, that easy grin of his lighting up his face, and it’s doing things to me I can’t quite shake. Emma’s back to herself now, mostly. Those C-cups from Cindy James told me he gave her still stretch her top, but she’s oblivious to the swap, laughing with Mia like nothing’s changed. I twirl the swapping device between my fingers, its cool metal glinting under the dim lights. It’s a tease, a promise of chaos I’m dying to unleash, especially with James.

I lean in close, dropping my voice to a conspiratorial whisper. “You know, James, I could just slip on my ring and command Emma not to care. She’d be totally fine with us fooling around. No fuss, no guilt.” I watch his face, hunting for that spark of temptation I know lives in him.

He pauses, his eyes flicking to Emma, then back to me. His jaw tightens, and for a heartbeat, I think he’s caving. But then he shakes his head, exhaling sharply. “No, Lila. It’d still feel wrong. I love her too much to mess with that, even if she wouldn’t know.”

I smirk, leaning back with a casual shrug. "Suit yourself." But inside, frustration twists tight. He's slipping, I can feel it, that flicker of want in his eyes. I want him, bad, and that device could make it so damn fun. He's holding out, though, for now.

He sips his drink, grinning faintly. "I can still have fun with Emma, you know. She doesn't need to know about the swaps. Keeps it clean."

I tilt my head, curious. "Why not tell her? Bring her in on the game. Could be wild."

James's expression clouds over. "It's already messy with Sam. I don't want more people knowing, more changes to track. It's safer this way."

Fair point, but it doesn't scratch my itch. Before he can react, I snatch the device from the table, grinning wickedly. "Fine, if you won't play, I will." I aim it at Sam, still strutting his stuff across the room, and select "breasts." One tap, and a buzz jolts through me. My chest tingles, then warms, and I glance down as my breasts start to swell. They grow rounder, fuller, pushing against my top with a slow, delicious stretch. The skin tightens as they inflate, heavy and firm, the weight settling into my shoulders. My nipples harden, brushing the fabric, and I can't help but cup them, feeling the heft spill over my hands. It's like they're blooming, each breath making them bounce a little more, a thrill racing down my spine. "Look at these, James," I purr, arching my back. "Imagine what we could do with this."

He bursts out laughing, shaking his head. "Yeah, that's not gonna work, Lila."

I pout, tapping the device to swap them back. My chest deflates, shrinking to normal, and the electric buzz fades. "You're impossible," I mutter, but I'm grinning too. He's got his limits, and I get it. He's already got Emma to play with. But me? My ring's fun, sure, commanding people to dance to my tune. But swapping body parts, rewriting reality? That's a whole other level of wild, and I'm craving it.

James stretches, standing. "Bathroom break. Back in a sec." He wanders off, leaving me with the device. I rejoin the group, sliding into the chatter, but my hand brushes the device in my pocket. I pull it out, turning it over. James never took it back off me.

An idea sparks, sharp and reckless.

I glance at Emma, giggling with Mia. What if... I set the swap to "entire body," targeting myself and Emma, and hit the button. The world lurches, a dizzy spin that nearly knocks me off my feet. When it settles, I'm staring at the table from a new angle. My hands are smaller, nails painted a soft pink. I look down, and Emma's body greets me. Her C-cups jut out,

heavier than mine, her hips narrower, butt smaller. My skin's lighter, her blonde hair tickling my shoulders. It's bizarre, like stepping into a stranger's skin, every move slightly off.

Across the table, there's... me. Emma in my body, chatting away in Emma's clothes. To everyone else, she's still Emma, reality bending around the swap. But James won't see it that way. I need to smooth this out. I select "clothes" and swap them quick. Now I'm in Emma's outfit, and she's in mine. Seamless.

It's freaky, seeing myself across the table, but to the group, nothing's changed. She's Emma, I'm Lila. Except I'm not. And James won't know the difference, thanks to the device's rules. Time to lock it in. I slip on my ring, the familiar weight grounding me, and clear my throat. "Hey, everyone. Listen up. Emma's actually Lila, and I'm Emma. Act like that's normal until James and I leave tonight. Don't think it's weird. And when we're gone, forget I said this and go back to how things were."

They blink, then nod, like it's no big deal. Emma, in my body, smirks at me, her posture shifting to mimic mine, all sass and edge. "Hey, Emma, you good?" she asks, her voice low like mine. The others turn to me, calling me Emma now. It's perfect.

James strolls back, sliding into the booth. He leans over and kisses me, quick and casual, thinking I'm Emma. My heart skips, but no one flinches. The group keeps chatting, Emma-in-my-body tossing me a knowing wink. It's working.

I lean into him, softening my voice to match Emma's. "Babe, I'm not feeling great. Can we head out?"

He frowns, brushing a strand of hair from my face. "You okay?"

"Just a headache," I lie, standing and taking his hand. "Let's go."

He nods, tossing goodbyes to the group. I glance back as we leave, catching Emma, in my body, waving. They all shake their heads, the ring's command unraveling as we step outside. Perfect.

The night air hits me, cool and sharp, and I tug James toward the car. "Let's go back to your place," I say, keeping my tone steady. He agrees, and as we drive off, my pulse races. He's got no idea who he's really with, and that's exactly how I want it. The night's just beginning.

For a bonus chapter to chapter 7, check out patreon.com/JohnManTD

Chapter 8

Lila's POV

I'm sitting on James's bed, legs crossed, the faint hum of the shower filling the room. The sheets are soft beneath me, a little rumpled from earlier when we'd tumbled onto them, laughing. Now, though, it's just me, alone with my thoughts, and the wild reality of what I'm pulling off. I'm Lila, tucked snugly into Emma's body, wearing her clothes, her scent, her everything, and James has no idea. He thinks I'm his sweet, familiar Emma. The thrill of it buzzes under my skin like electricity.

"Em, can you grab me a towel?" James's voice echoes from the bathroom, casual but loud enough to cut through the water's patter.

I blink, caught off guard for a second. "Uh, where are they?" I call back, keeping my tone light, like Emma would.

He laughs, a little muffled. "Don't you remember? Top shelf, linen closet, just outside the door."

Right. Of course Emma would know that. I hop off the bed, padding barefoot across the hardwood floor, and find the closet exactly where he said. The towels are neatly stacked, and I grab a fluffy blue one, feeling a tiny rush of satisfaction at playing the part so well. I toss it through the cracked bathroom door, hearing a "Thanks, babe!" before I retreat to the bed, settling back onto the edge.

The shower keeps running, and for the first time since I slipped into this body, I've got a moment to myself. A moment to *explore*. My hands drift to the hem of Emma's t-shirt, lifting it slightly. Underneath, her bra's been digging into my ribs, too tight for comfort. Screw it. I reach behind, unclasp it, and shimmy it off, letting it drop to the floor. Instantly, her, no, Cindy's, breasts spill free under the shirt, heavy and unrestrained. They flop slightly, and I'm not used to the weight, the way they shift with every breath. Damn, Emma's got a nice rack. Or, wait, Cindy does. James is right, it's a nightmare keeping track of these swaps.

Curious, I cup them through the fabric, feeling the soft give, the firmness beneath. The nipples perk up under my touch, sensitive and pronounced. Nice. Really nice. But there's more to see. I glance toward the bathroom door, still hearing the water, and decide to keep going. I tug down Emma's jeans and panties, kicking them aside, and take a good look at her pussy. It's different from mine, more of an outie, the lips fuller, less tucked in than my own cute little setup. It's not as delicate, maybe, but it's got its own charm. I run a finger along it, just testing, and note the smoothness, the lack of hair. She keeps it neat. The rest of her, though, hips narrow, butt flat, feels a bit plain without those standout tits. Her face, though, that's the real winner.

I stand, crossing to the full-length mirror by his dresser, and study Emma's reflection. Wow. She's cute. Big eyes, soft cheeks, a little button nose. No wonder James is smitten. I tilt my head, mimicking one of her shy smiles, and it's uncanny how natural it feels.

The buzz of an electric razor starts up in the bathroom. He's shaving now, which means I've got time. I slip her jeans back on, leaving the panties off for the hell of it, and decide to explore. Slipping out of his room, I pad down the hall, the house quiet except for a low murmur coming from Cindy's room. I pause outside her door, ear cocked. Her boyfriend's over, and he's mid-pitch.

"Come on, Cin, it's been forever," he's saying, voice low and coaxing. "You know you want to."

"No, Mark, I don't," Cindy snaps back, sharp but tired. "You're a damn sex addict. Get help."

I stifle a laugh. Juicy stuff. He mutters something defensive, but I don't stick around to hear it. Last thing I need is Cindy catching me eavesdropping. I'm halfway back to James's room when I nearly collide with Stacy, his Mom, rounding the corner.

"Uh, Hi?" she says, no recognition in her eyes. Oh, right. To her, I'm Lila, not Emma.

Panic flares, but I've got this. I flick the ring on my finger, the artifact humming to life, and push a quick command into her mind: *You think I'm Emma tonight*. Her expression softens, a smile tugging at her lips.

"Oh, hey, Em," she says, brighter now. "Didn't see you there."

"Hi, Stacy," I reply, mimicking Emma's warmth. "Just heading back to James."

She nods and moves on, none the wiser. I let out a breath, grinning to myself as I slip back into his room. Perfect timing, James steps out of the bathroom, towel around his waist, hair damp and tousled. He looks good, all clean lines and easy confidence.

"Hey, you," he says, crossing to me. "Miss me?"

"Always," I tease, pitching my voice just right, soft and flirty like Emma's. He chuckles, sitting beside me, and we chat for a bit, casual stuff about his day, the weather, nothing deep. I nod along, laughing at his jokes, keeping it convincing.

Then he shifts closer, his hand brushing my hip, and leans in. His lips meet mine, warm and firm, and I sink into it, heat blooming in my chest. This is more like it. His hands tighten on my hips, pulling me closer, and I feel that familiar spark ignite. I reach for his towel, tugging it free, and it drops to the floor, leaving him bare. He quirks a brow, surprised.

"Someone's eager," he murmurs, but there's no complaint in his tone, just amusement.

I grin, kissing him harder, and we tumble back onto the bed, hands roaming. He's curious, I can tell, probably wondering why "Emma" is so forward tonight, but he rolls with it, his fingers slipping under my shirt. Things heat up fast, our breaths mingling, bodies pressing closer. I'm waiting for him to pull out the device, craving that extra twist of chaos, when he suddenly pauses.

"Hey, can I grab something real quick?" he asks, pulling back.

I pout playfully. "Sure, but hurry."

He nods, hopping up, and grabs his phone from the dresser, tapping at it. I see right through the act, he's not texting anyone. I know that glint in his eye. He's up to something with the device. I turn away, pretending to adjust my hair, giving him the opening he needs. Sure enough, I hear him set the phone down, and there's a faint rustle as he reaches for it.

I brace myself, heart pounding. The device's range is limited to the house, so it could be anything, his mom's curvy figure, Cindy's slightly older vibe, something wild and abstract. I don't know what's coming.

Zzzztfff.

A sharp sound cuts the air, and I freeze, waiting. Nothing changes physically. My hands pat my chest, my hips, all the same. But then my mind shifts, a flood of raw, urgent desire slamming into me. Holy shit. It's intense, primal, like I need to jump him *right now*. It clicks, he's swapped Cindy's boyfriend's sex drive into me. The effect is dizzying, a wild rush I've never felt before. Is this what my ring feels like to others, to feel your mind shift like that? I like it.

Zzzztfff.

Another jolt, and this time my thoughts twist again. Images flash, creative, filthy ways to pleasure James, positions and tricks I've never even considered. No way. He's given me his mom's sexual experience. My head spins with know-how, decades of expertise packed into me, and it's a total turn-on.

Zzzztfff.

One more, and this time my pants shift, a pressure building. I glance down, expecting a thicker ass or wider hips, but instead there's a bulge. A *bulge*. I stifle a gasp, eyes darting to James. He's still naked, but where his cock should be, there's Emma's pussy, smooth and bare. What the hell? He's swapped our genitals. I've got his penis, and he's got my... her vagina. My pulse races, excitement warring with nerves. I've never had a dick before, and he'll expect me to act like I've always had it.

I swallow, forcing a casual smile. "Ready when you are," I say, voice steady, channeling Emma's breezy confidence.

He grins, climbing back onto the bed. "You're killing me tonight, Em."

I laugh, leaning in to kiss him, and let the game begin.

James's lips crash into mine, hungry and insistent, and I match him, the new sex drive roaring through me like a wildfire. My hands roam his back, nails grazing his skin, and he shivers, pressing himself closer. The bulge in my pants, his cock now mine, throbs against the fabric, hard and demanding attention. It's strange, this weight between my legs, but it's thrilling too, a power I've never known.

I pull back, tugging my shirt over my head, and my breasts, Cindy's breasts, bounce free, nipples already tight. James's eyes darken, fixed on them, and I smirk, cupping one casually. "Like what you see?" I tease, pitching it like Emma would, playful but sure.

"Always," he breathes, hands sliding to my hips, tugging at my jeans. I help him, kicking them off, and my cock springs free, thick and rigid. I wrap a hand around it, stroking once, testing the feel. It's hot, pulsing, and the sensation shoots straight through me, sharp and electric. I've never felt anything like it, but thanks to his mom's experience, I know exactly what to do with it.

James stares, licking his lips. "Fuck, Em, you're so big tonight."

I grin, leaning down to kiss him, letting my cock brush his thigh. "All for you, babe," I murmur, voice low and husky. He groans, hands tangling in my hair, and I trail kisses down his neck, nipping at his collarbone. His skin's warm, salty, and I linger, sucking a mark just below his jaw. He arches into me, a soft whimper escaping, and it's music to my ears.

Settling between his legs, I spread his thighs, exposing his pussy, Emma's pussy, now his. It's pink and glistening, already wet for me, and my mouth waters. I lean in, pressing a soft kiss to his clit, and he jolts, a low moan spilling out. "Oh, God, Em," he whispers, hands fisting the sheets.

I lick him slowly, savoring the taste, sweet and sharp, and he trembles under my tongue. Circling his clit, I tease, then dip lower, tracing his entrance. He's so sensitive, every touch pulling gasps and shudders from him. I slide a finger inside, feeling the tight, slick heat, and he bucks, desperate. "More," he begs, voice ragged.

I add another finger, curling them just right, hitting that spot I now know drives him wild. His hips jerk, a cry tearing from his throat, and I keep the rhythm steady, my tongue working his clit in tandem. He's loud now, moaning without restraint, and it's intoxicating, knowing I'm doing this to him. I could get him off like this, but I want more.

I pull back, grinning at his frustrated whine. "Not yet," I say, crawling up his body. My cock presses against his entrance, hot and insistent, and I meet his glazed eyes. "I want to feel you."

"Yes, Em, fuck me," he pants, legs wrapping around my waist.

I push in slow, inch by inch, groaning as his tight heat swallows me. It's incredible, the way he stretches around me, the pressure building with every thrust. I bury my face in his neck, bottoming out, and mutter, "Fuck, you're amazing." My voice is strained, raw with need.

"Move," he pleads, pulling me deeper. "I need you."

I start thrusting, slow at first, letting him adjust, then faster, finding a rhythm that has us both gasping. The sensation's overwhelming, my cock throbbing inside him, every stroke sending pleasure crashing through me. I can feel it building, too fast, but I'm not done yet. I reach down, rubbing his clit in tight circles, matching my thrusts, and he arches off the bed, nails digging into my back.

"Em, I'm so close," he pants, voice breaking.

"Come for me," I whisper, my own climax roaring closer. "Let go, baby."

He does, a loud cry ripping through the room as his pussy clenches around me, pulsing hard. It's too much, tipping me over, and I come with a groan, spilling deep inside him. We collapse, sweaty and tangled, breaths heaving as the high fades.

Swap to James' POV

I'm sprawled across the bed, my chest heaving, sweat slicking my skin as I try to catch my breath. Beside me, Emma's curled up, her blonde hair fanned out over the pillow, her breathing slow and deep. The air's thick with the scent of sex, and my body's still buzzing from what we just did. For a moment, I just lie there, staring at the ceiling, letting the afterglow wash over me. But there's work to be done. I roll over, grabbing the device from the nightstand.

My fingers move over the controls, reversing the swaps one by one. First, our genitals. *Zzzztfff*. That faint electric hum fills the room, and I feel the familiar weight settle between my legs, my cock returning like an old friend. I glance down, a small grin tugging at my lips. Back to normal. Emma stirs beside me, her hand drifting to her crotch. She frowns slightly, adjusting to the shift, then relaxes again.

Next, the sex drive. *Zzzztfff*. And finally, the sexual experience. *Zzzztfff*.

"That was unreal," Emma murmurs, her tone thick with awe. "Unlike anything I've ever felt." She glances at me, a lazy smile spreading across her face. "You look like you're in your own world over there. "

I nod, still half-lost in the memory of it. She Has no idea what just happened. That we swapped genitals. "Yeah, you could say that. You did great, though."

She chuckles, stretching out like a cat in the sun, her body loose and blissful. "Thanks. You did alright yourself, especially for someone who'd never had a pussy before during sex."

I freeze. My heart stutters, and I turn to her, eyes narrowing. "Wait. What did you just say?"

Emma's smile falters, and she claps a hand over her mouth, but it's too late. The words are out, loud and clear. "How do you know that?" I ask, sitting up. My voice is calm, but my mind's racing. "Emma wouldn't know about the swaps. She'd think it was always like that."

Her eyes widen, and then she bursts into laughter, bright and unrestrained. "Oh, crap. Caught me."

I stare at her, the pieces snapping together. "Lila? Is that you?"

She nods, still giggling. "Yeah, it's me. Hi, James."

"What the hell?" I lean forward, my jaw dropping. "How?!"

She sits up, pulling the sheet around her like a toga, her grin wide and unapologetic. "Back at the bar. I swapped bodies with Emma. Used my ring to tweak everyone's perception, make them see me as her and her as me. It was a little experiment, and, well, it worked like a charm."

I blink, trying to process it. "So, all this time, it was you in there? Not Emma?"

"Yep," she says, popping the 'p' with relish. "Fooled you good, didn't I?"

I should be pissed. I mean, I really should. But instead, a laugh rumbles up from my chest, and soon I'm cracking up, the sheer ridiculousness of it hitting me full force. "You're insane," I manage between gasps. "Completely insane."

She laughs too, her eyes dancing with mischief. "I know. But you're not mad, are you?"

I shake my head, wiping a tear from my eye. "I think I should be. Hell, I probably should be furious. But honestly? I'm kind of excited. More magical adventures with you sounds... fun."

Her grin softens into something warmer, and we share a quiet moment, the laughter fading into a comfortable silence. Then, out of nowhere, Lila's hand drifts between her legs, and she starts idly fingering herself, her expression curious. "You know, Emma's pussy is different from mine," she says, all casual, like she's discussing the weather. "Hers is more of an outie. Mine's cuter, though, way more tucked in."

I blink, thrown off. "Lila, c'mon. You're still in Emma's body. That's weird."

She laughs, pulling her hand back. "It's just interesting, you know, comparing notes."

"Shut up," I say, rolling my eyes, but there's no real bite to it. "You're a freak."

"Guilty," she chirps, grabbing the device from the nightstand. "But check this out." She taps a few buttons, and I hear that *zzzztttt* again. Her body shifts before my eyes, hips widening, ass rounding out, breasts swelling into lush, full curves. She's got my mom's figure now, all voluptuous and tempting. She stands, spinning in front of the mirror, admiring herself. "What do you think? Enhanced Emma, ready for round two?"

My cock twitches, already stirring at the sight. "Jesus, Lila, you don't quit."

She smirks, sauntering back to the bed. "Nope. But settle down, tiger. I'm just teasing. Should see the look on your face! I'm still a little wiped from round one."

I grin, snatching the device from her. "Oh, we can fix that." I scroll through the options, select her sex drive and swap it with Cindy's boyfriend again. *Zzzztfff*. Lila's eyes light up, and she bolts upright, a hungry edge to her smile.

"Oh, fuck yes," she says, her voice low and eager. "Now I'm ready."

I don't waste a second. I grab her, spinning her around so she's on her hands and knees, that thick, juicy ass right in front of me. My hands roam over it, squeezing the soft, plump

flesh, and she moans, pushing back against me. It's unreal, seeing Emma's body this voluptuous, but damn if it isn't hot. My cock's rock-hard now, throbbing with need.

I position myself behind her, sliding into her slick heat with a groan. She's tight, gripping me perfectly, and I start moving, slow at first, savoring the feel of her. The way her ass jiggles with each thrust is hypnotic, full and round, begging to be grabbed. I dig my fingers into her hips, pulling her back to meet me, and she gasps, her head dropping forward.

"God, James," she pants, her voice rough. "That's so good."

I pick up the pace, thrusting deeper, harder, the sound of skin slapping against skin filling the room. Her moans get louder, spilling out in a steady stream, and I can't get enough of it. That ass, so thick and plush, bounces with every move, and I reach around, cupping her heavy breasts. They're soft and warm, spilling over my hands, and I pinch her nipples, rolling them between my fingers. She cries out, her body trembling under me.

The bed creaks beneath us, the headboard tapping the wall in time with my rhythm. I lean forward, pressing my chest to her back, and she arches into me, her skin hot and slick with sweat. My hands slide down her sides, tracing the exaggerated curve of her hips, and I grip her tighter, slamming into her with everything I've got. She's a mess now, moaning and whimpering, her arms shaking as she struggles to hold herself up.

"Harder," she begs, her voice breaking, and I oblige, pounding into her relentlessly. The pressure's building, a tight coil in my gut, and I know I won't last much longer. I reach down, finding her clit, and rub it in quick, firm circles. She bucks, a sharp scream tearing from her throat as she comes, her pussy clenching around me like a vice. It's too much, and I lose it, thrusting deep one last time as I spill inside her, a guttural groan ripping out of me.

We collapse onto the bed, a sweaty, tangled heap, and I pull her close, kissing her shoulder. My heart's still racing, my breath ragged, but I feel incredible. "That was insane," I murmur, my voice hoarse.

"Yeah," she agrees, her tone soft and sated. "Fucking amazing."

We lie there for a while, letting our breathing even out, and then I grab the device again. "Time to clean up the mess," I say, reversing the swaps. *Zzzztfff*. Her body shifts back to Emma's normal form, and I undo the sex drive swap too. *Zzzztfff*. Lila sighs, settling into herself again.

"So, what was the plan here?" I ask, propping myself up on an elbow. "Just some swapping fun in bed?"

She grins, stretching lazily. "Pretty much. And I sure as hell got it, didn't I?"

I laugh, shaking my head. "Yeah, you did. But wait, won't people be confused with you like this?"

"Nah," she says, waving a hand. "Everyone else sees me as Lila. The reality shift takes care of that. You're the only one who got fooled because you're aware of the swaps."

I blink, then it clicks. "So, everyone thinks I'm dating a girl who looks like Lila?"

"Exactly," she says, laughing again. "Wild, huh?"

The sheets are tangled around us, the air heavy with the scent of sweat, and my chest tightens with a strange mix of satisfaction and unease. I don't know what to say, so I just lie there, staring at the faint glow of streetlights filtering through the blinds.

Lila shifts, her breath warm against my skin. "I'll need to change back anyway," she says, her voice low and casual, like she's commenting on the weather. "Can't stay in Emma's body forever, you know."

I turn my head to look at her, blinking away the fog in my mind. "Yeah, I'd hope so. I'd like my real girlfriend back." I smirk. "You got stuff to do?"

She nods, propping herself up on one elbow. Her eyes catch the dim light, glinting with something playful. "Club meeting in a few days. I need my own body back for that. The other artifact owners would spot something off if I showed up looking like Emma."

My brows shoot up, curiosity sparking through the haze. "Club meeting?"

Lila grins, sitting up fully now, the sheet slipping down to her waist. She doesn't bother pulling it back up, and I try not to let my gaze linger. "The artifact wielders' club," she says. "I saw your look when I first mentioned it the other day, but it's not some creepy cult or anything. Just a bunch of us who've got these weird, powerful things. We meet up every few months to catch up, trade stories, keep an eye on each other."

I sit up too, leaning against the headboard, my interest piqued. "Like, how many?"

She tilts her head, thinking. "Hard to say exactly. I know about a dozen, give or take, but there could be more out there we haven't met. We're not centralized or anything. Some are here in LA, some in New York, a couple overseas. It's more like a network than a club, I guess. Artifact wielders are rare, and the stuff we deal with can get messy. So we stick together, kind of."

"That's insane," I say, running a hand through my hair. "What do they do? I mean, what kind of artifacts are we talking about?"

Her grin widens, and she leans in closer, her voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. "All kinds of crazy shit. There's this guy, Marcus, out in Chicago. He's got a pendant that stops time for ten seconds. Uses it to dodge traffic or grab a coffee without waiting in line. Total show-off, but he's harmless. Then there's Elena, this woman from London. She's got a bracelet that lets her shapeshift into anyone she's touched before. Last time I saw her, she turned into my old high school principal just to mess with me. Nailed the voice and everything."

I laugh, picturing it. "That's nuts. Who else?"

"Oh, you'd love Jess," Lila says, her eyes lighting up. "She's the one with the gender-swap ring I mentioned before. One twist, and boom, you're flipping from guy to girl or whatever

else you want. She's always testing it out, seeing how people react. Says it's the ultimate social experiment. And then there's this kid, Noah. Barely eighteen, skinny as hell, found a coin that grants wishes. Sounds awesome, right? Except every wish goes sideways. He wished for a new car once, and it showed up—stolen, with cops chasing it. Poor guy's paranoid now, barely uses it."

"Jesus," I mutter, a chill creeping up my spine. "That's messed up."

"Yeah, it can get dark," she admits, her tone sobering for a moment. "Artifacts aren't toys. They've got rules, quirks, sometimes curses. That's part of why we meet up. To share what we know, warn each other about the risks. Like, Marcus figured out his pendant gives him migraines if he overuses it. Elena's bracelet? She can only hold a shape for a few hours before it starts to hurt. My ring's pretty tame by comparison—just mind tricks, no physical toll. But still, you've got to respect the power."

I nod, my mind buzzing with questions. "So it's like a support group? For people with magic crap?"

"Kind of," she says, laughing softly. "But it's more than that. It's a way to stay connected. Most people don't get what it's like, you know? Having something that bends reality, changes who you are or what you can do. The club's a place where you don't have to explain yourself. Plus, we trade tips, show off a little. It's fun, in a weird way."

I lean back, letting that sink in. "And you want me to come? To this meeting?"

"Hell yeah," she says, nudging my shoulder. "You should meet everyone, join the club officially. You've got that swapping device—nobody else has anything like it. Most artifacts are simpler, you know? Time-freezing, shapeshifting, mind control. Yours is... well to be honest I've never seen something quite this powerful, it bends the whole world around you. They're gonna lose their minds when they see it."

A thrill runs through me, sharp and electric. "Really? You think I'd fit in?"

"Absolutely," she says, her smile warm and genuine. "You're one of us now, James. Tomorrow night, downtown at this old bookstore. It's our usual spot—quiet, neutral, no prying eyes. We keep it low-key. A few beers, some stories, maybe a little demo if someone's feeling bold. You in?"

I don't even have to think about it. "Yeah, I'm in. Sounds incredible."

"Good," she says, settling back down beside me, her head finding my shoulder again. "You'll love it. They're a weird bunch, but they're my weird bunch."

We fall into a comfortable silence, her breathing slowing as sleep creeps closer. I stare up at the ceiling, my mind spinning with images of time-stopping pendants and shapeshifting bracelets, a secret world I'm about to step into. It's exhilarating, like I've stumbled into something bigger than myself. But as the quiet stretches on, something else creeps in—a pang of guilt, sharp and cold, slicing through the excitement.

I just slept with Lila. Another girl. Not Emma. The thought hits me like a punch, and my stomach twists. I cheated on Emma, plain and simple. She's at home right now, probably asleep, trusting me, and here I am with Lila, tangled up in sheets.. My chest tightens, and I swallow hard, trying to push the feeling down.

But then another thought slinks in, softer, more insidious. *Did I really cheat?* The artifact changed everything. She has Emma's body. Reality bent around us, rewrote itself so seamlessly that even Emma wouldn't suspect a thing. It's not like I snuck around behind her back in the usual way. This was magic, something beyond normal rules. Maybe it doesn't count the same.

I glance at Lila, her face relaxed in the dim light, and the guilt flares again. No, that's a cop-out. I know it is. I made the choice. Once I found out, I still fucked her anyway. I crossed a line. Artifact or not, I knew what I was doing. But even as I think it, the device's power hums in the back of my mind, a quiet, tempting whisper. It's changing me, loosening my grip on right and wrong. The swaps, the rush of rewriting reality—it's addictive, and I can feel it pulling me under.

Maybe that's the point, I tell myself. This isn't the old me anymore. The old James wouldn't have done this, wouldn't have even considered it. But the guy with the artifact? He's different. He's part of something bigger, something wild and unbound. And if the rules are different here, maybe what happened tonight isn't betrayal. Maybe it's just... part of the game.

I let out a slow breath, my eyes drifting shut. The guilt's still there, a dull ache I can't quite shake, but it's softer now, muted by the promise of tomorrow. The club meeting, the other wielders, the artifacts—it's a new world, and I'm stepping into it with both feet. Whatever this power's doing to me, I'll figure it out. For now, I'll let it ride.

Beside me, Lila murmurs something in her sleep, still in Emma's body, and I pull her closer, the warmth of her body easing me into the dark.

Chapter 9

The last few days have been... weirdly quiet. After that insane night with Lila – the body swap, the sex, finding out she wasn't Emma, and then doing it again after learning the truth – I half expected reality to keep twisting itself into knots around me. But it didn't. The next day felt almost anticlimactic. I met up with Lila and Emma for coffee, a plan Lila had texted me about while still pretending to be Emma. Seeing them side-by-side was a trip. Lila, back in her own skin, gave me this barely perceptible wink, while Emma, bubbly and bright, seemed completely oblivious, like she hadn't just spent a night mentally MIA while her body was out on loan.

The swap back was quick, discreet. I palmed the device under the table, selected them both, targeted "entire body," and hit the button. Zzzzt. A faint buzz barely audible over the café chatter. Emma blinked, maybe adjusted her shirt slightly, but otherwise showed no sign anything had happened. Lila just smirked, taking a slow sip of her latte. Later, Emma complained about a vague headache and feeling oddly tired, but she brushed it off. No memory, no suspicion. Just... normal.

And that's the thing, isn't it? The device's clean-up job is flawless. As long as the target isn't aware, as long as they don't remember, did it really happen in a way that matters? I keep turning that thought over in my head. Sleeping with Lila... yeah, technically, I cheated on Emma. My gut twists a little even thinking it. But Emma doesn't know. She can't know, not unless I bring her into this whole mess, and I'm definitely not ready for that. So, if there are no witnesses, no evidence left in reality's code, does the act itself still carry the same weight? It feels slippery, that logic, like I'm trying to find a loophole in my own conscience. But the thrill of what happened, the raw intensity of it, drowns out the guilt faster than I'd like to admit. It was magic, pure and simple. A different set of rules. Maybe my old moral compass just doesn't apply here. The thought is both liberating and deeply unsettling, like stepping onto shifting sand. For now, I'm pushing the guilt down, burying it under the excitement of this new world Lila's pulled me into.

After that coffee, the week crawled by with agonizing normalcy. I went to work at the café, dealt with spilled lattes and passive-aggressive customers. I hung out with Sam, listening to him rave about his glorious F-cups and the perks they brought him (free drinks, guys tripping over themselves, the works). He's still loving them, completely unbothered by the fact that they're permanently attached unless we find a willing swap victim. Classic Sam. I went on a couple more low-key dates with Emma – dinner, a walk on the beach – and she was just... Emma. Sweet, funny, completely unaware that her body had been hijacked or that her boyfriend was juggling reality-bending secrets. Every time I looked at her, a fresh wave of guilt would wash over me, but I'd push it back, focusing on the easy comfort between us, the life I was trying to keep separate from the artifact chaos.

But even in the mundane, the device was always there. A constant presence in my pocket, a heavy weight against my thigh, humming with latent power. Standing in line at the grocery store, I'd find myself eyeing the cashier's sharp jawline, wondering what it would feel like swapped onto my own face. Driving home, stuck in traffic, I'd glance at the guy in the beat-up truck next to me, noticing his muscular arms, and the thought would flicker: Swap. Easy. The temptation was relentless, a low-grade fever simmering beneath the surface. I resisted, though. After the intensity of the past weeks – the gender swaps, the gym fiasco,

Lila – I needed a break, a moment to breathe and pretend my life wasn't spiraling into some kind of sci-fi porno. I needed to feel normal, even if normal now felt like wearing an ill-fitting suit. But the quiet only amplified the device's pull, the knowledge of what it could do a constant itch I couldn't scratch. It was like having a superpower I was deliberately choosing not to use, and the restraint was almost physically painful.

Finally, Saturday night rolls around. The night of the artifact club meeting. My stomach's been doing nervous little flips all day. This is it. The step into the wider world Lila promised, the chance to meet others like me, others who understand the weird, intoxicating reality of wielding these impossible objects. I spent the afternoon trying to act normal, playing video games with Sam (who kept adjusting his massive chest under his hoodie, grinning every time I rolled my eyes), grabbing lunch with Emma (pushing down the guilt, focusing on her smile). But my mind was elsewhere, buzzing with anticipation.

I wanted to pre-game with Lila, maybe get the lowdown on who's who and what to expect, but she texted earlier saying she had family stuff and couldn't meet up beforehand. "Just meet me there, you'll be fine. Try not to look like a total newbie ;)" Great. So I'm flying solo into a secret society of reality benders. No pressure.

Evening creeps in, painting the LA sky in shades of orange and purple. I shower, taking longer than usual, letting the hot water drum against my shoulders, trying to wash away the nervous energy. What do you even wear to a secret artifact club meeting? A cape? Normal clothes? I settle on dark jeans, a fitted black t-shirt that shows off the subtle definition I borrowed from Mark (still got that fitness boost, apparently), and my favorite leather jacket. Casual, cool, hopefully projecting an air of confidence I definitely don't feel.

I check myself in the mirror. Hair's decent. Look presentable. Deep breath, James. You've handled gender swaps and mind control rings; you can handle a party. The final piece: the device. I grab it from my nightstand, its surface cool and smooth against my palm. It feels heavier tonight, charged with significance. This isn't just my personal toy anymore; it's my ticket into something bigger. I slip it into my jacket pocket, the weight familiar, grounding. Alright. Time to go.

The address Lila texted me leads to a nice, sprawling house nestled in one of the quieter, older neighborhoods slightly uphill from the main city sprawl. Manicured lawn, big oak tree out front, multi-car garage – it screams old money, or at least successful parents. Definitely not the grungy basement or abandoned warehouse my imagination had conjured up for a secret club meeting spot. This meeting is apparently the biggest one they've had in a while,

Lila mentioned casually, like the network's suddenly expanding. More people finding artifacts? The thought sends a ripple of unease through me. More wielders means more variables, more potential chaos.

I park the Mercedes down the street – no need to advertise the ill-gotten gains just yet – and walk up the stone pathway. Music drifts from the open windows, a low thrum of indie rock, mixed with laughter and conversation. It sounds... normal. Like any other house party on a Saturday night. Taking another deep breath, I push open the heavy oak door and step inside.

The interior confirms the vibe. It's spacious, tastefully decorated, and buzzing with people. Maybe thirty, forty heads milling around, clustered in conversation groups, drinks in hand. Some are lounging on plush sofas, others leaning against the walls, a few gathered around a table laden with snacks. It's a mixed crowd, mostly college-aged or maybe late twenties, diverse styles, relaxed energy. No shadowy figures in cloaks, no intense stares. Just... people.

Before I can fully process the scene, a girl detaches herself from a group near the entryway and approaches me, clipboard in hand. She's got bright pink hair cut in a sharp bob, multiple piercings glittering in her ears and nose, and an oversized band tee that swallows her small frame. Her eyes, lined with thick black eyeliner, scan me with friendly efficiency.

"Hey! Welcome," she says, her voice surprisingly cheerful. "Haven't seen you before. Name?"

"Uh, James," I reply, feeling suddenly awkward, like I'm crashing a party I wasn't invited to.

Her eyes light up as she scans the list on her clipboard. "James... James... Ah, here you are! Lila's plus one, right?" She taps the name with her pen, looking up with a wide grin. "Awesome! Lila's around here somewhere, probably causing trouble. Go on in, grab a drink, make yourself at home."

"Thanks," I manage, relief washing over me. At least I'm expected. She gives me a nod and turns back to greet someone else coming through the door. Okay. Step one, survived. Now what?

I scan the room again, searching for Lila's familiar dark hair and sharp grin, but she's nowhere in sight. Sam's not here either, though I didn't really expect him to be – artifact club feels a bit too organized for his brand of chaos. So, I'm alone, adrift in a sea of strangers who all share this bizarre secret. My nerves prickly again. Best course of action? Blend in. Act natural. Get a drink.

I make my way toward the kitchen, navigating through clusters of people laughing and gesturing animatedly. As I pass one group, I overhear snippets: “—so then I just froze time right before the bus hit me,” and “—turned into my cat for an hour, ended up stuck under the couch.” My eyes widen slightly. They’re talking about it, just like that, casually dropping reality-bending anecdotes like they’re discussing the weather. This is different.

The kitchen is less crowded, a few people grabbing beers from a massive fridge or loading plates with chips and dip. I head straight for the fridge, pulling out a cold beer, the condensation instantly dampening my palm. As I pop the cap off on the counter edge, a voice pipes up beside me.

“First timer?”

I turn to see a girl leaning against the counter, watching me with bright, curious eyes. She’s maybe my height, with a cascade of sunny blonde hair pulled back in a messy ponytail, framing a face that’s all freckles and smiles. She’s wearing denim shorts and a simple white tank top that hugs a modest B-cup chest. There’s an infectious energy about her, bubbly and open.

“Is it that obvious?” I ask, managing a weak smile.

She laughs, a light, musical sound. “Kind of. You’ve got that ‘deer in headlights trying to act cool’ vibe going on. Don’t worry, we were all there once.” She holds out a hand. “I’m Lee. Nice to meet you.”

“James,” I reply, shaking her hand. Her grip is firm, friendly. “Lee? Is that short for something?” The name sounds a bit unusual, maybe incomplete.

“Nope, just Lee,” she says brightly, grabbing a soda from the fridge. “So, James, Lila vouching for you means you’re packing some cool artifact. What’s your poison? What magical nonsense did you stumble upon?”

I hesitate for a split second. Lila’s warning echoes in my head: Don’t show anyone that your artifact works on artifact owners. It might draw unwanted attention. Good advice. Best play it cool, keep the full extent of the Swapper under wraps for now.

“It’s, uh, a swapping device,” I say, keeping my tone casual. “Lets me trade traits between people. Body parts, voices, that kind of thing.”

Lee's eyebrows shoot up. "Whoa, seriously? Like, you could swap my freckles onto someone else?"

"Pretty much," I confirm. I reach into my jacket, my fingers brushing the cool surface of the device. I'm about to offer a demonstration, maybe swap her hair color with someone across the room, just a quick, harmless visual. But Lila's warning holds me back. Better not risk revealing that it works on artifact owners just yet. I pull my hand back empty. "Uhh I can't."

Lee doesn't seem disappointed. "Ohhh right, it won't work on me as an artifact owner. Duh. Still, that's badass! A swapping device. The possibilities..." Her eyes sparkle. "Mine's maybe less versatile, but still fun." She holds up her own artifact – a simple silver locket hanging from a chain around her neck. "Watch this."

She takes a deep breath, closes her eyes for a second, takes off the locket, and then... changes. It's not a shimmer or a flash, more like a subtle morphing, a rearranging of features right before my eyes. Her blonde hair darkens, shifting to a glossy black, cut shorter now, framing a face with distinctly East Asian features – higher cheekbones, almond-shaped eyes that are now a deep brown. Her skin tone shifts, taking on a warmer, yellower hue. Even her body seems subtly different, maybe a touch more petite. She opens her eyes, and the transformation is complete. She looks entirely different, undeniably Chinese.

Then she speaks, and the change is even more jarring. "Hewo?" she says, and the word comes out thick, the 'l' replaced with an 'r', the vowels clipped. Her American accent is gone, replaced by a heavy, stereotypically Chinese accent that makes her words almost difficult to parse. "It change... evlyting. My wook, my voice... how I sound."

My jaw is practically on the floor. I stare, speechless, as she continues, her accent making the sentences choppy, the grammar slightly off.

"See? This... this is weal me. Owiginal me," she says, gesturing to herself. Her expression is a strange mix of pride and something sadder, resigned. "But I find rocket..." She touches the locket. "And I can be... diffelent."

She closes her eyes again, putting the locket back on, closing her eyes for a moment to focus, and the transformation reverses. The black hair lightens back to blonde, features soften back to Caucasian, skin pales slightly. When she opens her eyes, she's Lee again, the bubbly blonde with the perfect American accent.

"There," she says, sighing softly. "Much easier, right?"

I'm still reeling. "Whoa. That's... incredible. It changes your race?"

"And ethnicity, yeah," she confirms, tucking the locket back under her tank top. "Complete physical and vocal shift. I found it a couple of years ago. At first, it was just a trip, you know? Being someone else for a bit. But then..." She hesitates, her bright smile faltering for a moment. "Things got kinda tense, you know? With all the anti-Asian stuff flaring up, especially around campus. People yelling shit, giving me dirty looks. It just got... exhausting. Being this..." she gestures to her body "...is simpler. People aren't rude, they don't assume things. It's easier to just blend in."

I don't know what to say. Laughing feels wrong, but being overly serious feels patronizing. The casual way she talks about changing her race to avoid harassment is jarring, a stark reminder that these artifacts aren't just fun and games; they're tools people use to navigate a messy, often hostile world. I also realize that her name probably isn't Lee, it's Li, which makes more sense. "Wow, Li," I say. "I'm sorry you have to deal with that. That sucks."

She shrugs, but her smile returns, a little less bright this time. "It is what it is. The locket helps. Most days, I just stay like this." She gestures to her 'Lee' appearance. "Easier than explaining, you know? Anyway!" Her energy snaps back. "Enough sad stories. Wanna try it? The locket works on anyone wearing it."

My eyes widen. "Seriously? I can just...?"

"Yep! We can't use artifacts on other artifact owners, but we can still use them on ourselves. Go on, just think of a race or ethnicity when you put it on. Any one you want." she urges, unclasping the chain and holding it out to me. She shifts back into her natural asian body.

My hand trembles slightly as I take the locket. It's surprisingly light, cool against my skin. I hesitate for a beat, then fasten the chain around my neck. Okay. Race. What do I pick? My mind flashes through options. Black? Asian? Indian? Then it hits me – Latino. Maybe someone who looks like they just stepped off a telenovela set. I close my eyes, picturing it – darker skin, maybe wavy black hair, sharp features.

A strange tingling washes over me, different from the Swapper's buzz. It's more like my skin is rearranging itself, stretching and settling in new ways. I feel my hair thicken, curl slightly at the temples. My facial structure seems to shift, angles sharpening. I open my eyes and glance down at my hands. My skin is definitely darker, a warm olive tone. I rush to a reflective toaster on the counter, peering at myself.

Holy shit. It worked. The face staring back is mine, but undeniably Latino. Darker eyes, thicker brows, a stronger jawline, wavy black hair replacing my usual brown. I run a hand over my face, feeling the unfamiliar contours. "This is insane," I whisper, my voice sounding subtly different, maybe a touch deeper, huskier.

Li laughs beside me. "Rooks good! Very nice." Her accent is hard to understand.

I grin at my reflection, flexing slightly. Even my body feels subtly different, maybe a bit leaner, more defined under my shirt. It's bizarre but exhilarating. Reluctantly, I unclasp the locket. The tingling returns, and I watch in the toaster's reflection as my skin lightens, hair fades back to brown, features soften. I'm me again. I hand the locket back to Li.

"That's... wow," I say, still processing. "Your artifact is amazing, Li."

"Thanks," she says, slipping it back on and instantly morphing back into her white self. "Yours sounds way crazier, though. Swapping anything? Wild." She glances past me. "Oh, hey, speaking of crazy, you gotta meet Mike and Noah. Come on."

She grabs my arm, pulling me out of the kitchen and back into the main party area. The energy is still high, music pulsing, conversations buzzing. Li leads me to a cluster of people lounging on beanbag chairs in a corner near a large bay window overlooking the backyard.

"Guys, this is James, Lila's friend," Li announces, squeezing onto a beanbag. "James, this is Mike, and that's Noah."

Mike looks up from his phone. He's a lanky guy with glasses perched on his nose and an air of intense concentration, even while relaxing. He gives me a brief nod. "Hey. Heard you got a Swapper."

Noah unfolds himself from another beanbag. He's younger, maybe early twenties, with bright, mischievous eyes and floppy brown hair that constantly falls into his face. He's got a wiry energy, bouncing on the balls of his feet even while sitting. "Dude, sick! What's the craziest thing you've swapped?"

"Uh, haven't done too much yet," I lie smoothly, remembering Lila's warning. "Still figuring it out."

Mike pushes his glasses up his nose. "Mine's simpler. Mind reading." He taps his temple. "Got this little implant behind the ear. Found it embedded in an old radio I bought. Lets me pick up surface thoughts from anyone within about ten feet. Useless against other wielders,

though, obviously. Your minds are all static.” He winks. “So your dirty secrets are safe with me, James.”

I chuckle, feeling a wave of relief. “Good to know. Can you, like, turn it off?”

“Yeah, it’s got a threshold,” Mike explains. “Too much noise, like in here, and it’s mostly mush unless I focus hard on one person. It’s better for quiet settings. Great for poker, terrible for concerts.”

Noah jumps in before I can ask more. “Okay, okay, mind reading’s cool, but check this out.” He proudly holds up his artifact – a tarnished silver necklace with a swirling, intricate pendant that seems to pulse faintly with inner light. “Shapeshifting. Anything I want, long as I’m wearing this.”

My eyebrows shoot up. “Anything? Like, animals too?” Lila mentioned this guy.

“Yep! Birds, dogs, cats, you name it. Clothes don’t change, though, which can get awkward,” Noah grins. “But the best part is copying people. Watch.” He focuses his gaze on me, and his body seems to blur for a second, like heat haze rising off asphalt. Then it solidifies, and I’m staring at... myself. An exact duplicate, same height, same build, same clothes, same slightly nervous expression I probably have right now. He’s even got my voice.

“Whoa,” Mirror-James says, mimicking my tone perfectly. “Trippy, right?”

I’m speechless. It’s flawless. Li and Mike are laughing.

“He does this all the time,” Li says. “Freaks people out.”

Noah-as-James grins. “But wait, there’s more!” He flexes, and suddenly his muscles bulge. The black t-shirt strains across a newly ripped chest and bulging biceps. He’s still me, but like a version of me that spends six hours a day at the gym and eats nothing but protein powder. “Instant upgrade,” Buff-James chuckles, his voice now deeper, more resonant. “Always wanted to see what you’d look like jacked.”

“Okay, that’s impressive,” I admit, slightly envious.

“Oh, it gets better,” Buff-James says, his eyes gleaming with that signature Noah mischief. He quickly unbuckles his jeans, dropping them to his ankles. My eyes widen, along with everyone else’s, as he focuses downward. His penis, my penis, seems to stretch, thicken, morphing rapidly into something... else. It swells to an obscene size, thick and veiny, curving

slightly upward like a dark, pulsing question mark. It's unmistakably equine. A fucking horse cock. On my body.

"Ta-da!" Noah booms in my voice, gesturing proudly.

A collective groan goes through the group. "Noah, put it away!" Li cries, half-laughing, half-disgusted.

"Classic Noah," Mike mutters, shaking his head but smiling faintly. "Such a freak."

Noah laughs, pulling his pants back up quickly. "What? It's hilarious!" The horse cock vanishes as he concentrates, replaced by my normal anatomy before he's fully zipped. He shifts again, the muscles deflating, and he's back to being regular James. "Alright, alright, one more, then I'll behave."

He closes his eyes for a second, and his form melts again. This time, he reshapes into... Margot Robbie. Blonde hair cascades down his shoulders, blue eyes sparkle, and his body molds into her famous curves. But it's not an exact copy. The breasts are larger, spilling generously out of his black t-shirt, which now looks like a ridiculously ill-fitting crop top on her. Her ass, straining against his jeans, is fuller, rounder, perfectly heart-shaped.

"See?" Noah says, striking a pose, his voice a perfect imitation of Margot's sultry tone. "They don't think this is weird." He winks, running a hand over his enhanced chest. "Everyone loves a bombshell."

I can't help but laugh along with the others. It's absurd, perverse, but undeniably impressive. He holds the pose for another moment, soaking up the attention, before blurring back into his own form, floppy hair and all, pulling the now-baggy t-shirt down.

"Okay, show's over," Noah says, grinning.

The party swirls around me, a kaleidoscope of faces and voices, music weaving through the chatter like a vibrant thread. They've welcomed me into their corner, shared their secrets, and now the initial 'new guy' awkwardness is starting to fade, replaced by a buzzing curiosity. Noah's still cracking jokes, occasionally shifting a facial feature just to mess with people, while Li and Mike are locked in a debate about the ethics of mind-reading for finding lost keys. I nurse my beer, leaning back against the wall, just observing, soaking it all in. This is my new world, apparently.

My eyes drift across the room, scanning the mingling groups. I spot Pink-Hair-Clipboard-Girl near the door, efficiently directing a newcomer. I see a guy effortlessly levitating a pretzel inches above his palm while talking to a mesmerized girl. This place is unreal. The casual display of power is jarring, yet everyone treats it like it's Tuesday.

Then my gaze lands on her. She's standing near the fireplace, slightly apart from the main clusters, sipping a drink and observing the room with quiet intensity. She's petite, maybe 5'4", with soft brown hair falling around her shoulders. Her face is pretty in a gentle, unassuming way – big brown eyes, a small nose. Cute, definitely. She's wearing a simple, dark floral dress that fits her well, hinting at subtle curves. There's an air of shyness about her, a reluctance to fully engage with the party's chaotic energy, that resonates with my own initial feelings. Something about her draws me in. Maybe it's just that she looks approachable, less intimidating than some of the more flamboyant personalities here. On impulse, I push off the wall and start weaving my way towards her.

She looks up as I approach, her eyes widening slightly, a flicker of surprise crossing her features. She offers a small, hesitant smile.

"Hey," I say, stopping a comfortable distance away. "I'm James. Are you new here too?" Okay, maybe not the smoothest opener, implying she looks as out of place as I feel, but it's out there now.

Her smile warms slightly, reaching her eyes. "Hi, James. I'm Annie. And yeah, kind of. I mean, I know Lila, she invited me, but this is my first... big meeting." Her voice is soft, a little melodic.

"Same here," I admit, relief washing over me. Finding another newbie feels like finding a fellow traveler in a foreign land. "Lila invited me too. It's pretty overwhelming, right?"

Annie lets out a little laugh, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "Totally. Everyone seems so... casual about having superpowers, basically. I saw a guy shapeshift into a perfect copy a girl he was talking to before making out with her, and another girl just casually grow her height to reach the top shelf in the kitchen. It's wild."

I chuckle, rubbing the back of my neck. "Yeah, I'm finding it hard to adjust. It wasn't that long ago I didn't even know any of this was possible."

"Tell me about it," she agrees, her gaze drifting around the room again. "It's like stepping into a comic book, but everyone's just mingling and grabbing snacks."

We fall into easy conversation after that. Turns out Annie's a freshman at UCLA. We compare notes on local restaurants, the questionable quality the food at this party, and the general chaos of navigating LA. She's sharp, observant, with a dry wit that emerges when she gets comfortable. We talk about her majors – she's undecided but leaning towards art or design, which sparks a connection, as it's something I've vaguely considered myself.

"It's just hard, you know?" she confides, swirling the drink in her cup. "Everyone expects you to have it all figured out, but I feel like I'm just... floating. Trying not to sink."

"I get that," I say, nodding. "Completely. Feels like everyone else got the instruction manual for life, and mine got lost in the mail."

She laughs, a genuine, warm sound this time. "Exactly! It's nice to know I'm not the only one."

There's a comfortable lull in the conversation, and my curiosity about her artifact bubbles up again. I glance around, making sure no one's overtly listening. "So," I start, lowering my voice slightly, "What kind of crazy magic thing did you find?"

Annie's cheeks flush faintly, and she looks down at her drink, tracing the rim with her finger. "Oh, um, it's really not that impressive," she murmurs, fidgeting slightly. "Compared to shapeshifting or swapping people's brains around, mine's pretty... niche."

"Come on," I coax gently. "Everything here seems pretty wild. I bet yours is cool." I'm genuinely curious now. Her hesitation makes it seem more intriguing.

She bites her lip, then meets my gaze, her brown eyes uncertain. "It's... well, it's a watch." She lifts her wrist slightly, showing me a delicate silver band with a small, elegant face. It looks perfectly normal, chic even. "It, uh... it changes my breast size."

I blink. "Your... breast size? Seriously?"

She nods, her flush deepening. "Yeah. I can dial it up or down. Change the band size too, apparently. Found it on campus a few weeks ago. It's kind of silly, honestly." She gives a self-deprecating little laugh.

Breast size. My mind flashes back to the swaps I'd done – Cindy's chest, Mom's, the gym girl, Lila's temporary enhancement. This is different. Not swapping, but changing. Growing or shrinking. A watch that controls bust size. It's absurd, almost comical in its specificity, yet undeniably intriguing.

“That’s not silly, Annie,” I say, leaning in slightly. “That’s fascinating. How does it work?”

Before she can answer, a familiar voice cuts in, bright and teasing. “Talking about your magic boob watch, Annie?”

We both turn as Lila materializes beside us, slinging an arm around Annie’s shoulders. Annie jumps slightly, then relaxes into Lila’s embrace with a familiar smile. Okay, so they are friends. Good friends, judging by the easy way Lila invades her personal space.

“Lila, hey,” Annie says, laughing. “I was just telling James.”

Lila grins at me, her eyes sparkling with mischief. “Isn’t it the best? I told you she had something cool. You haven’t shown him yet, have you, Annie?” She gives Annie’s shoulder a little squeeze.

Annie shakes her head, looking slightly embarrassed but also amused. “No, I was just explaining.”

“Well, explanation time is over. Demonstration time!” Lila declares dramatically. “Come on, show him the goods. Give him the C-cup special, or maybe the D-cup delight?”

Annie rolls her eyes, but there’s a playful glint in them now. “Okay, okay, fine. But don’t make it weird.” She turns back to me, takes a small breath, and then focuses on the watch. I watch, fascinated, as she twists the small dial on its side.

Instantly, I see it. A subtle warmth seems to emanate from her chest, and the fabric of her floral dress tightens. Her breasts swell smoothly, gracefully, expanding outward. It’s not the jarring, instant shift of Noah’s shapeshifting or the quick zap of my Swapper. This is organic, like watching a time-lapse video of puberty hitting fast forward. They grow from what looked like maybe a modest A or small B to a definite C-cup, full and round, pressing against the neckline of her dress, creating noticeable cleavage where there was none before. She stops the dial, her cheeks slightly pink, and offers a shy smile.

“See?” she says softly.

I’m mesmerized. The change is so seamless, so real. There’s no flicker, no distortion, just... growth. My eyes are glued to her chest, tracing the new curves. It’s undeniably hot, watching the transformation happen right there, but it’s also scientifically fascinating from an artifact perspective. This isn’t swapping existing matter; it’s seemingly creating or altering it.

“Wow,” I breathe, finally tearing my gaze away to meet her eyes. “That’s... really cool, Annie. Seriously. The way it just... happens.”

She shrugs, a small smile playing on her lips. “Yeah, it’s neat, I guess.” She twists the dial again, and just as smoothly, her breasts deflate, shrinking back to their original size, the dress loosening around her chest. “But like I said, kinda lame compared to what you guys can do. It’s not exactly saving the world or reading minds. Pretty limited, day-to-day.” She pauses, then adds with a slightly cryptic smirk, almost to herself, “But I’ve... managed to make it work for me.”

I catch the odd inflection, the hint of something hidden behind her words, but before I can puzzle it out, Lila claps her hands together.

“Limited? Girl, please. The applications are endless!” Lila winks at me. “Anyway, James, can I steal you for a sec? Need to discuss club politics.” She throws Annie another quick hug. “Catch you later, Annie! Don’t let the shapeshifters bite.”

Annie laughs. “Will do. Nice meeting you, James.”

“You too, Annie,” I say, offering her a smile before Lila tugs me away towards a less crowded hallway off the main living area.

Once we’re out of earshot, Lila’s playful demeanor evaporates, replaced by a sharp, focused intensity. She stops, turning to face me, her eyes scanning the empty hallway. “Okay, quick check-in,” she says, her voice low. “You’ve been behaving, right? No swapping weirdness? And definitely no demonstrating the, uh, special features of your device?”

I hold up my hands defensively. “Scout’s honor. Kept it vague, just like you said. Told Li and the others it swaps traits, showed them nothing. Nobody knows mine can affect other wielders.”

Lila nods, letting out a breath of relief. “Good. Keep it that way. Seriously, James. What you have... it’s different. People here are used to artifacts having rules, limitations, especially the one about not affecting each other. Yours breaks that rule. If people knew... some might get scared, others jealous. It could make you a target for the wrong reasons, long before Bill’s boogeyman artifact even shows up.”

Her seriousness chills me slightly. “Got it. Secret stays safe.”

“Damn right.” She glances back towards the party noise, then leans in conspiratorially. “Speaking of targets, you ready for the main event? Bill’s about to start his sermon.” She rolls her eyes dramatically. “Try to stay awake.”

I follow her back towards the living room just as the indie rock fades out, replaced by the gentle feedback screech of a microphone. A hush falls over the crowd as people turn their attention towards a small, slightly elevated platform near the fireplace that I hadn’t noticed before. Standing there is a man who looks to be in his mid-to-late forties. He’s unassuming in appearance – thinning brown hair, wire-rimmed glasses, dressed in comfortable slacks and a button-down shirt, slightly rumpled. He doesn’t look like the leader of a secret society; he looks like a suburban dad about to give a toast at a barbecue.

“That’s Bill,” Lila whispers beside me, nudging my arm. “The founder, the glue, the guy with the slightly creepy book.”

Bill taps the microphone, offering a warm, slightly nervous smile to the room. “Evening, everyone. Evening! Glad you could all make it. Looks like we’ve got a great turnout tonight, bigger than ever, which is fantastic to see.” His voice is calm, reassuring, with that slight dad-like quality. “For those of you who are new,” his eyes briefly sweep the room, maybe catching mine for a fraction of a second, “welcome. My name is Bill, and I, uh, sort of got this whole thing started a few years back.”

He gestures vaguely around the room. “This club, this network, whatever you want to call it, exists for a simple reason: we’re different. We’ve stumbled onto something... extraordinary. These artifacts,” he pauses, letting the word hang in the air, “they change things. They change us. And navigating that alone can be isolating, even dangerous. So, we gather. We share stories, offer support, trade information, and generally try to keep each other from doing anything too monumentally stupid.” A ripple of laughter goes through the crowd.

“My own artifact,” Bill continues, patting a worn, leather-bound book resting on a small lectern beside him, “is this book. It allows me to... influence reality, in a very specific way. If I write a sentence about a particular person – someone without an artifact, I should stress – that sentence becomes true for them. It’s a responsibility I take seriously. And like all artifacts, it has its rules. It doesn’t work on any of you in this room. Our artifacts protect us from the direct influence of others. A fundamental rule. Mostly...”

He clears his throat, and the mood in the room shifts subtly. The relaxed vibe tightens, anticipation crackling in the air. Bill’s expression turns grave.

"Which brings me to a more serious matter," he says, his voice losing its warmth, taking on a harder edge. "Many of you are aware of the old stories, the legends passed down through artifact circles for generations, maybe centuries. Stories of the origin. Of the First Artifact."

My blood runs cold. Lila stiffens beside me.

"These legends speak of a time before the rules," Bill continues, his gaze sweeping the silent room. "A time when the very first artifact was created. Not a ring, not a pendant, not a watch... but a scroll. An ancient, powerful scroll that didn't just nudge reality, but could rewrite it entirely. It didn't just influence individuals; it could reshape the fabric of existence itself."

He pauses, letting the weight of his words sink in. "The power was deemed too great, too uncontrollable. The potential for catastrophe, astronomical. According to the legends, the very beings or forces that introduced artifacts into our world recognized this danger. And so, a fundamental limitation was woven into all subsequent artifacts: they cannot directly affect another artifact wielder. A safeguard. A firewall to prevent one of us from gaining absolute power over the others, from rewriting our realities, our very beings."

My heart is hammering against my ribs. I glance at Lila. Her face is pale, her eyes wide, fixed on Bill. She knows. We both know. He's talking about my device.

"For a long time," Bill says, his voice low and somber, "we believed the First Artifact, the scroll, was lost to time, perhaps destroyed, its power too volatile to exist. But recent whispers, fragmented reports, anomalies that don't fit the established rules... they suggest something unsettling." He looks directly out at the crowd now, his eyes seeming to pierce through the dim light. "There is growing concern, credible concern, that the First Artifact has resurfaced. Likely reshaped, disguised in a modern form, but possessing its original, terrifying capability: the power to alter reality, **and** the power to affect artifact wielders themselves."

A collective gasp, a murmur of disbelief ripples through the room. People shift uneasily, glancing at their neighbors.

"I know this is alarming," Bill says, holding up a hand to quell the rising anxiety. "Believe me, the implications are... staggering. An artifact that bypasses our inherent protection threatens the secrecy, the safety, the very existence of our community. It could be used to control us, change us, erase us, without us even realizing it until it's too late, if our reality gets warped."

He takes a deep breath. “We don’t know its current form. It could be anything – a phone, a tablet, a game controller, hell, even a simple pen. We don’t know precisely how it affects wielders, whether it bypasses the memory protection, or if its physical effects are permanent. The legends are unclear on the specifics of its interaction with those already protected. What we do know is that it breaks the cardinal rule. And that makes its current wielder... incredibly dangerous.”

His next words land like hammer blows. “Therefore, a consensus has been reached among some of the oldest and most established members of our network. A significant bounty is being offered. For concrete information leading to the identification and securing of this First Artifact, and the individual who currently possesses it.”

The air feels thick, suffocating. Bounty. They’re hunting for me. For the device in my pocket.

“Be vigilant,” Bill warns, his voice resonating with urgency. “Look for anomalies. Changes that don’t make sense, even by our standards. Powers manifesting in ways they shouldn’t. People suddenly altered, physically or mentally, in ways that defy the rules as we know them. If you encounter something, someone, demonstrating power that seems to rewrite reality or directly manipulate another wielder... be cautious. Report it. The artifact must be contained.”

He finishes speaking, the silence stretching, heavy and oppressive. Then, slowly, the background music fades back in, tentative at first, trying to fill the void. Conversations start up again, but they’re hushed now, laced with suspicion. People are looking at each other differently, a new layer of paranoia coating the room.

I grab Lila’s arm, my hand shaking slightly. “We need to talk. Now.”

She nods grimly, her face tight with worry, and steers me back towards the empty hallway we were in before. As soon as we’re out of sight, I whirl on her, my voice a panicked whisper.

“Lila, what the fuck?! A bounty? They’re hunting for me!”

“I know, James, I know,” she says, running a hand through her hair, her usual cool facade cracking. “Shit. This is... this is way worse than I thought. I’ve heard whispers about the First Artifact, but always treated it like a myth, a boogeyman story. But if your artifact fits the legend... Fuck, James.” She paces the narrow hallway, chewing on her lip. “A reality warper that ignores the main rule? No wonder they’re scared. That kind of power...”

“They want to ‘secure’ it? What does that mean? Take it from me? Lock me up?” The panic bubbles higher.

“I don’t know,” Lila admits, stopping to face me, her eyes dark with concern. “Could mean anything. Neutralize the threat, maybe study the device. But ‘bounty’ doesn’t sound good. Someone desperate or ruthless might come after you, James. Someone who wants the reward, or maybe even the device itself.”

The implications slam into me. Every person at that party is now a potential threat. Every friendly smile could hide suspicion, every question could be an interrogation. My secret isn’t just about kinks and fun anymore; it’s about survival.

“Okay,” I say, forcing myself to breathe, to think. “Okay. Nobody knows it’s me. Nobody saw me demonstrate it on anyone here.”

“Right,” Lila confirms. “You played it smart. Li, Mike, Noah, Annie... they just think you have a cool swapping gadget. They don’t know its true potential, the rule it breaks.”

“So we keep it that way,” I say firmly, meeting her gaze. “Absolute secrecy. Nobody else finds out. Not Sam, not Emma, definitely no one from the club.”

Lila nods, her expression resolute. “Agreed. This stays between us. We need to figure out what’s going on, who put up this bounty, how much danger you’re really in. But we do it quietly.”

“How?”

“I don’t know, I need time to think about it. In the meantime, be careful who you use it on, and never let anyone see it affect another wielder. Act normal.”

“Normal,” I repeat, the word tasting like ash. “Right.”

We stand there for another moment, the unspoken danger hanging heavy between us. The party sounds distant now, muffled. This secret, our secret, just became a thousand times heavier.

“We should probably get back out there,” Lila says eventually, forcing a strained smile. “Acting weird will only draw attention.”

I nod, squaring my shoulders, trying to project a calm I don’t feel. “Yeah. Okay. Let’s go.”

Stepping back into the main room feels like diving back into a slightly distorted reality. The music's still playing, people are still laughing, drinks are still flowing, but the undercurrent has shifted. Or maybe it's just me. Every friendly glance now feels like scrutiny, every casual question a potential probe. The knowledge of the bounty hangs heavy in the air, a storm cloud only Lila and I can see.

Lila drifts beside me, grabbing two more beers from a cooler near the back door. She hands one to me, her fingers brushing mine, and the contact sends a jolt through me – not just attraction, but the electric charge of a shared, dangerous secret. "Act normal," she murmurs, her voice barely audible over the music, her eyes scanning the room. "Just blend."

Easier said than done. I take a long pull from the bottle, the cold beer doing little to calm the frantic hummingbird beating against my ribs. We rejoin a small group near the fireplace – Noah's telling an animated story involving shifting into a squirrel to steal exam answers, Mike's looking skeptical, and Li is giggling. I try to engage, nodding along, forcing a laugh, but my focus keeps splintering. I'm tracking movement, watching faces, trying to gauge who looks too interested, who seems too intense. It's exhausting.

We mingle for another hour or so. I chat with a guy who claims his artifact is a pair of dice that dictate minor luck – roll snake eyes, you stub your toe; roll double sixes, you find a prime parking spot. Sounds harmless enough. I talk to a woman with glasses that supposedly let her see through whatever she wants. Walls, bodies, even clothes. I left after she creepily told me I had a nice penis. Compared to the First Artifact... my artifact... these feel like party tricks. Lila works the room with practiced ease, laughing, flirting, gathering whispers of conversation, occasionally catching my eye with a look that says, Nothing yet, stay cool.

The booze helps numb the paranoia slightly, loosening my shoulders, letting me sink a little more into the party's rhythm. It's in this tipsy relaxation state that Bill finds me.

He appears suddenly at my elbow, materializing out of the crowd with that same unassuming, dad-like presence. He's holding a glass of what looks like water, his wire-rimmed glasses perched on his nose. "James, is it?" he asks, extending a hand. His smile is friendly, but his eyes behind the lenses are sharp, analytical.

"Yeah, that's me," I reply, shaking his hand. His grip is firm, dry. "Bill, right? You gave the welcome speech."

“Indeed,” he says, his gaze lingering on me for a beat too long. “Lila mentioned she was bringing a new face tonight. Glad you could make it. It’s always encouraging to see our little community grow.” He takes a sip of his water. “First impressions? Not too overwhelming, I hope?”

“It’s... a lot to take in,” I admit, opting for honesty, or a version of it. “Everyone’s abilities... it’s pretty wild.”

“It is,” he agrees readily. “We live in extraordinary times, James. Possessing an artifact... it sets us apart. A gift, I believe. Or perhaps a test.” He studies me again, a faint smile playing on his lips. “Lila mentioned you have a swapping artifact?”

My internal alarms blare. Keep it vague. Keep it safe. “Yeah, something like that,” I say casually, shrugging. “Lets me trade traits between people. Voices, hair color, minor stuff mostly. Still figuring out its quirks.”

Bill’s eyebrows raise slightly. “Fascinating. Swapping. A potent concept. Does it allow for more significant alterations? Physical forms? Abstract qualities?” His questions are precise, probing.

“Sometimes,” I say, deliberately evasive. “Like I said, still experimenting. It seems pretty limited, though.”

“I see.” He takes another sip of water, his eyes never leaving mine. “Would you mind demonstrating? On something simple, perhaps? Always illuminating to see another artifact in action.”

My throat tightens. This is the moment Lila warned me about. “Ah, I would,” I say, forcing a regretful tone, “but it’s got one major limitation I’ve discovered – it doesn’t seem to work on other artifact wielders at all. Like your book. Something about our innate protection just nullifies it completely. Tried it earlier on someone, nothing happened.” The lie feels smooth, plausible, banking on the very rule my device breaks.

Bill goes very still for a moment. His friendly mask doesn’t slip, but the analytical sharpness in his eyes intensifies. He seems to be dissecting my words, weighing them. Did he buy it? Or does he sense the deception? The silence stretches, thick with unspoken questions.

Then, slowly, he nods. “Interesting. Yes, the inherent protection is a curious thing, isn’t it? Varying levels, perhaps, depending on the artifact. A shame yours has such a restriction, but

understandable.” He offers that faint smile again, but it doesn’t quite reach his eyes this time. “Well, regardless, James, we’re happy to have you. New blood, new perspectives, it’s vital.”

He lowers his voice slightly. “And vital that you understand the... responsibility that comes with these gifts. Especially now.” He glances around the room, a flicker of gravity crossing his features. “This First Artifact... the potential for misuse is immense. An artifact that can affect us? It could unravel everything we’ve built, expose us all. We must be vigilant. Trust is paramount in this circle, but caution is necessary.”

He leans a fraction closer. “I believe we are chosen, James. Selected by forces we don’t understand – gods, fate, cosmic chance, call it what you will. Chosen to wield power, to navigate its complexities. It binds us together.” His tone is fervent now, bordering on zealous. There’s a gleam in his eye that makes my skin crawl. Gods? Chosen? Okay, officially creepy.

“Right,” I say, nodding slowly, trying to look thoughtful rather than freaked out.

“Responsibility. Got it.”

“Good,” Bill says, clapping me lightly on the shoulder, the friendly dad persona snapping back into place. “Enjoy the rest of the party. Don’t be a stranger. And if you see anything... unusual... you know who to talk to.” With a final nod, he melts back into the crowd, leaving me feeling like I’ve just narrowly avoided stepping on a landmine.

I immediately seek out Lila, finding her near the snack table, pretending to inspect a bowl of pretzels. I pull her aside again, back into the relative privacy of the hallway.

“Bill just talked to me,” I whisper, my voice tight.

Lila’s instantly alert. “And?”

“He asked about the device. Asked for a demo.” I quickly recount the conversation, the lie I told about it not working on wielders. “He seemed to buy it... maybe. But Lila, the way he looked at me when I said it... like he was trying to see right through me. And then he went on this weird tangent about being ‘chosen by the gods’. The guy’s intense.”

Lila chews her lip, frowning. “Damn. Bill’s sharp. He runs this whole network, knows more about artifacts than probably anyone. If he’s suspicious... that’s not good. The ‘chosen by the gods’ thing is his standard spiel, he genuinely believes it, thinks he’s guiding us or something. Makes him feel important. But it also means he takes threats to his ‘flock’ very seriously.”

“So you think he could be dangerous?”

“Potentially,” she admits grimly. “If he truly believes your device is the First Artifact, and that you’re lying about its limitations... he might see you as a threat that needs managing. Or eliminating. We need to be incredibly careful around him, James. Don’t give him any reason to doubt your story.”

The weight of the situation presses down on me again. Bounty hunters, a suspicious leader, a world-altering secret in my pocket. What the hell have I gotten myself into?

We head back to the party, plastering smiles on our faces, determined to act normal. We grab more drinks, mingle with different groups. I end up talking to Annie again for a bit, learning more about her art aspirations. Lila joins us, and the three of us chat easily, a little bubble of relative normalcy in the midst of the weirdness.

As the night wears on, the crowd thins out. The music gets softer, the lights dimmer. Lila and I have had a few more drinks, the alcohol finally managing to dull the sharp edges of my anxiety, replacing it with a warm, reckless buzz. We find ourselves leaning against a wall near the back patio, the cool night air drifting in.

Lila turns to me, her eyes dark and luminous in the low light. There’s a charge between us, amplified by the shared secret, the danger, the booze. “So,” she says, her voice a low murmur, “survived your first club meeting.”

“Barely,” I reply, a wry smile touching my lips. “Definitely more intense than expected.”

“It’s always an adventure.” She steps a fraction closer, her shoulder brushing mine. “Kind of hot, though, isn’t it? The risk? The secrets?”

I meet her gaze, and the air crackles. The memory of our night together, her in Emma’s body, the raw intensity of it, floods back. The guilt is still there, a faint whisper, but it’s drowned out by the proximity, the alcohol, the undeniable pull towards her.

“Yeah,” I admit, my voice husky. “It is.”

Her lips curve into a slow, knowing smile. “This house is huge. Lots of empty rooms upstairs...” The invitation hangs there, blatant and tempting.

My mind races. Emma. Don't. This is wrong. But another voice, louder now, slicker, whispers back, She'll never know. Reality bends. The rules are different here. Lila gets it. She's part of this world. This is okay. This is part of the game. The justification feels flimsy, transparent, but I cling to it. The thrill is too strong, the temptation too sweet.

"Lead the way," I say, my heart pounding a heavy rhythm against my ribs.

Lila's grin widens, triumphant. She takes my hand, her fingers lacing through mine, and pulls me through a doorway, up a dimly lit staircase, away from the fading party noise. We find an empty guest room, plush carpet silencing our steps, a large bed dominating the space, shadows pooling in the corners. The door clicks shut behind us, sealing us in our own private bubble.

The moment we're alone, the pretense drops. Lila turns to me, her eyes blazing, and pushes me back against the door, her mouth crashing onto mine. It's a hungry kiss, desperate and demanding, fueled by everything unspoken – the danger, the secrets, the forbidden thrill. I kiss her back just as fiercely, hands tangling in her dark hair, pulling her closer.

Clothes melt away in a tangle of limbs and urgency. Her skin is warm beneath my hands, smooth and inviting. We stumble towards the bed, shedding layers until we're both naked, bathed in the soft moonlight filtering through the window.

Lila pushes me down onto the mattress, straddling my hips, her eyes locked on mine. "Okay, Swapper," she breathes, her voice husky with desire. "Show me what that device can really do. "

A wicked grin spreads across my face. The request, the trust, the sheer audacity of it sends a fresh wave of heat through me. I reach for my jacket draped over a nearby chair, retrieving the device.

The challenge hangs in the air, and the alcohol, the adrenaline, the sheer power humming in my hand pushes me. No holding back. Okay. I take a deep breath, select "Entire Body," target us both, and press the button again.

Zzzztttt.

The sensation is instantaneous. I feel the weight of her C-cup breasts settling against my ribs, the curve of her hips beneath my hands, the absence between my legs replaced by her warmth, her wetness. I flex my fingers, long and slender, nails painted a dark crimson. I run

a hand down my flat stomach, over the gentle flare of my hip. It's incredible. Familiar from my previous gender swaps, but different knowing this isn't just a female form, it's Lila's.

Across from me, Lila is experiencing the reverse. She sits up fully in my body, looking down with wide eyes. She flexes my - now her - biceps, runs a hand over her abs. Then, her hand drifts lower, closing around her cock, which is already stirring, responding to her touch, her mind.

"Holy shit," she breathes, her voice now my deeper baritone. "This is... power. Feeling this... thing." She gives my cock a tentative stroke, and a jolt shoots through me, even though I'm in her body. The connection is still there, a phantom limb responding.

"It's intense, right?" I say, my voice Lila's melodic alto. It feels strange hearing it come from my own mouth. I stand up, testing her legs, feeling the different balance, the sway of her hips. I walk to a floor-length mirror against the far wall, turning slowly, examining myself. Lila's body is lean, athletic but feminine. Great legs, a tight ass, those nice C-cups not quite as big as Cindy's but still nice. Seeing it as mine is a whole new level of weird and wonderful.

Lila-in-my-body joins me at the mirror, standing beside me. Our reflections stare back – me in her body, her in mine. It's surreal. She wraps an arm around my waist, pulling me close. Her hand cups my breast.

"This is new," she whispers, her breath warm against my ear. "Swapping bodies entirely... never done this."

"Me neither," I admit, turning to face her, my heart pounding. The sight of my own body, animated by her consciousness, looking at me with desire, is intensely erotic. "Ready to see what it feels like?"

Her eyes darken with lust. "Fuck yes."

She pushes me back onto the bed, her movements now confident, possessive, exploring the power in my male form. She climbs over me, her weight solid and muscular, pinning me down easily. Her hands roam over my new female body, learning its contours, squeezing my breasts, eliciting gasps that feel foreign yet intimate coming from my lips.

"You feel incredible," she growls in my voice, leaning down to kiss me. Her kiss is rougher now, imbued with male strength, and I melt into it, arching up to meet her.

Then she positions herself, guiding my cock – her cock now – towards my entrance. I take a sharp breath as she pushes inside me. The sensation is overwhelming. Being penetrated. It's tight, stretching, a friction that's both intensely pleasurable and fundamentally alien. I moan, digging my nails into my back.

She starts to move, thrusting into me with my own body's strength and rhythm. It's the most disorienting, profoundly erotic experience of my life. I'm fucking myself, essentially, but experiencing it from the other side. Lila's moans are deep, guttural, coming from my throat, while mine are higher, breathless, spilling from hers.

She flips me onto my stomach, pulling me into a doggy style position. My new breasts hang heavy, swaying with the movement. She enters me again from behind, her thrusts deep and powerful. I brace myself on my hands, looking back over my shoulder, watching my own body pound into me. The sight is mesmerizing, hypnotic. It's raw, primal, and confusingly hot.

"How's that feel, James?" she pants in my voice, slapping my ass lightly.

"Fucking... weird," I gasp out, the sensations blurring. "But good. So good." And it is. There's a vulnerability in receiving, a surrender that's surprisingly potent. The impact, the fullness, the rhythmic pressure... it's igniting something deep inside me. A flicker of realization sparks: maybe I like this. Maybe I like being the one receiving, the one being filled. The thought is fleeting, almost shocking, but it resonates with the pleasure currently overwhelming my senses. The feeling of being taken, dominated, even by my own body piloted by someone else... it's unlocking a part of my desires I hadn't fully acknowledged.

Lila senses the shift, her thrusts becoming more targeted, teasing. She reaches around, her long fingers finding my clit, rubbing circles as she pounds into me. The dual stimulation is electrifying. I cry out, my body convulsing, pleasure spiking higher and higher.

"You like that, huh?" she murmurs, her voice rough with exertion. "Like being filled up, made to come?"

"Yes," I sob, coherence shattering. "Fuck, yes."

She rides me harder, faster, pushing us both towards the edge. I feel her climax building within my old body, the familiar tension coiling, while simultaneously feeling the waves of my own impending orgasm crashing through Lila's nerves. We come together, a tangled mess of swapped bodies and shared release, cries echoing in the quiet room. Her release inside me is a hot flood, while my orgasm rips through Lila's body, intense and shattering.

We collapse, limbs intertwined, sweat-slicked skin sticking together. My mind is reeling, trying to process the sensory overload, the profound weirdness and undeniable pleasure of what just happened. Lying there, in Lila's skin, feeling the phantom throb where my own cock used to be and the lingering fullness inside this pussy, I can't deny it any longer. As fucked up as it sounds, part of me, maybe a growing part, preferred that. Preferred being the girl. The thought settles, heavy and real, as the adrenaline fades, leaving me breathless in the moonlit room.

The tangled sheets feel impossibly soft against Lila's skin – my skin, for now. The air in the room is thick, hazy with the aftermath of sex, and my mind is still trying to reconcile the whirlwind of sensations. Being Lila, feeling her body respond, feeling my body respond under her control... it was a head trip of epic proportions. That strange, almost reluctant preference I felt simmering inside me earlier? It's solidified now, a quiet certainty settling in my gut. As insane as it sounds, receiving felt... better. More intense, more consuming.

"How you feeling over there, swapped and screwed?" She asks.

"Overwhelmed," I admit, my voice Lila's melodic alto. I push myself up, feeling the weight of my breasts shift.

"But awesome." She says, and swings her legs over the side of the bed, standing up and stretching in my body. "Okay, we should probably put clothes back on before someone barges in."

Clothes. Right. Her clothes. I grab her tank top first, pulling it over my head. The soft fabric slides down her torso, hugging curves I'm not used to. Then the jeans. They're snug, designed for her leaner hips and legs, and I have to wiggle a bit to get them zipped, the button digging slightly into my softer stomach. It feels constricting, foreign. Lastly, the bra. I fumble with the clasp behind my back, my fingers clumsy in this new configuration, eventually managing to hook it. Her breasts settle into the cups, a contained weight now.

Across the room, Lila's having an easier time with my clothes. My jeans hang a little looser on her narrower hips, my black t-shirt fitting comfortably over my flat chest. She pulls on my leather jacket, shrugging my broader shoulders into it. She looks... cool. Annoyingly cool, actually, wearing my clothes better than I probably do.

She catches me watching and laughs, the sound deep and resonant – my laugh. "What? Jealous I make your style look good?"

“Something like that,” I mutter, running a hand through her dark hair – my hair now. It feels silky, different. “It’s just... weird seeing you... being me.”

“Tell me about it.” She strikes a pose, mimicking my typical slouch, hands shoved in my jacket pockets. “Look at me, I’m James, I’ve got a magic artifact and a brooding expression.” Then she drops the pose and observes me critically. “You, on the other hand... wow. Seeing my body move like a dude is hilarious. Stop sitting like that.”

I realize I’m manspreading slightly on the edge of the bed, a habit I hadn’t even noticed. I quickly cross Lila’s legs, feeling heat creep up my neck. “Sorry. Force of habit.”

“It’s funny,” she says, shaking her head. “You move like you’re still expecting balls to be there.”

Before I can retort, the doorknob turns. We both freeze, eyes wide with panic, as the door swings inward. Bill stands there, looking mildly surprised to see us. His gaze sweeps over the room – the rumpled bed, us hastily dressed – and settles on Lila-in-my-body.

“Oh, sorry,” he says, his tone polite but holding an edge of authority. “Didn’t realize my room was occupied. Party’s winding down downstairs. Thought I’d turn in.”

His room? Shit. We picked the founder’s bedroom to hook up in. Smooth, James. Real smooth.

Panic claws at my throat. We’re in each other’s bodies. If Bill realizes... if he sees anything off... he’ll know. He’ll know my device can affect wielders. The bounty, the suspicion – it’ll all come crashing down. Lila catches my eye, her expression mirroring my own terror, but she recovers faster.

“Oh, Bill, hey!” she says, her voice my deep baritone, projecting forced casualness. “Sorry, man. James and I were just... looking for a quiet place to talk. Didn’t realize this was your room. We were just heading out anyway.” She gestures towards me, standing awkwardly by the bed in Lila’s clothes.

Bill’s gaze flicks to me, lingering for a moment. Does he notice something? The ill-fitting clothes? The way I’m standing too stiffly? My heart pounds like a drum against Lila’s ribs.

“No problem at all,” Bill says smoothly, his eyes unreadable. “Just locking up soon. Don’t want anyone wandering off where they shouldn’t.” He gives us another tight-lipped smile.

“Have a good night, James. Lila.” He nods curtly and backs out, pulling the door almost closed behind him.

The second he’s gone, Lila lets out a shaky breath, grabbing my arm. “Holy fuck,” she whispers, her voice my own low rumble. “That was too close. He totally knows we fucked in his bed.”

“Forget the bed, Lila, we’re body-swapped!” I hiss back in her voice, my hands shaking. “If he suspected anything...”

“He didn’t,” she insists, though her eyes are still wide. “We played it cool. He just thinks we were hooking up. But we need to get out of here, now. Before he comes back or someone else sees us like this.”

“How? We can’t swap back here!”

“We don’t,” she says, her tone urgent. “We walk out like this. We pretend. You’re Lila, I’m James. We just need to get to your car.”

Pretend? Walk through the rest of the party, talk to people, as each other? The idea is terrifying. My performance as Lila needs to be convincing, and frankly, I suck at acting.

“Okay,” I whisper, steeling myself. “Okay. Play it cool. Say bye and bolt.”

Lila nods, taking a deep breath in my chest. “Right. Let’s go. And James?” She looks me up and down, a flicker of amusement in her eyes despite the panic. “Try to walk like a girl, okay? Less stomping.”

I scowl, but she’s right. I focus, trying to channel Lila’s usual confident stride as we step out into the hallway. It feels ridiculous, forcing my hips to sway slightly, taking smaller steps in her jeans. My breasts shift with the movement, a constant, distracting reminder of the charade.

Downstairs, the party has indeed thinned. Maybe fifteen people remain, scattered around the living room, conversations low and intimate. The music is quieter now. We need to find our jackets – my leather one that Lila’s wearing, and her denim one I’d seen draped over a chair earlier.

“There,” Lila-in-my-body murmurs, nodding towards the chair. I walk over – trying to make it a glide, not a stomp – and retrieve her jacket. Slipping it on over her tank top feels... okay. It

fits her frame, my current frame, perfectly. Lila shrugs deeper into my leather jacket, looking ruggedly handsome in a way that's deeply unsettling.

Time for the awkward part. We need to say goodbye. We approach the main group, where Noah, Li, and Mike are still chatting near the fireplace.

"Hey guys, we're heading out," Lila announces in my voice, sounding convincingly like me trying to sound casual.

Noah looks up, grinning. "Leaving already, James? Party's just getting good!" He looks over at me with a smirk that creeps me out. "Don't let him drag you away too soon, Lila. Stick around."

Heat floods my face. I force a light laugh, trying to mimic Lila's playful tone. "Nah, gotta run. Early start tomorrow." I try to give Noah a flirty little shoulder nudge like Lila might, but it comes off as an awkward bump. God, I'm terrible at this.

Li beams at us. "Okay! Nice meeting you, James!"

Mike just gives a curt nod. "Drive safe."

We murmur our goodbyes, trying to extract ourselves quickly.

We finally make it outside, bursting through the front door into the cool, blessedly empty night air. We practically sprint down the sidewalk, not stopping until we reach the Mercedes parked under a flickering streetlight half a block away.

"Get in, get in!" Lila urges in my voice, fumbling with my keys. We tumble into the car, slamming the doors shut, the sudden enclosure feeling like a sanctuary. For a moment, we just sit there, breathing heavily, the adrenaline pounding in our ears.

"Okay," I gasp, my voice Lila's alto. "Swap us back. Now."

Lila nods, already holding the device she must have slipped from my jacket pocket during our escape. She aims it between us. Zzzztttt.

The world rights itself with a dizzying lurch. I feel the familiar solidity return to my frame, the comforting weight between my legs, the absence of breasts. I'm me again. I look over at Lila, who slumps back in the passenger seat, running a hand through her own dark hair, letting out a long sigh.

“Jesus Christ,” she breathes, her voice hers again. “That was the most stressful five minutes of my life.”

“Tell me about it,” I agree, feeling the residual tension drain out of me, leaving me shaky but immensely relieved. “Pretending to be you? Terrifying. I think I almost tripped three times trying to walk in your jeans.”

She laughs, a real, genuine sound this time. “You did look pretty ridiculous trying to sashay. And feeling you try to act cool in my body? Hilarious and disturbing.”

We sit in silence for another moment, the shared ordeal creating a strange intimacy.

“Thanks for getting us out of there,” I say eventually. “And for... you know.”

“Hey,” she says, turning to me, her expression soft in the dim light. “Tonight was... intense. In a lot of ways. But we handled it.” She pauses. “I meant what I said, though. We stick together on this artifact thing. Keep the secrets safe.”

“Deal,” I say firmly. “Between us.”

I start the engine, the Mercedes humming to life. “Need a ride home?”

Lila yawns, stretching in the passenger seat. “Yeah, that’d be great. Thanks.” Then she glances at me sharply. “Wait. We both drank a fair bit tonight. Are you good to drive?”

Shit. She’s right. The adrenaline had masked it, but the buzz is definitely still there. I feel warm, fuzzy, my reaction time probably shot. “Uh...”

“James,” she says sternly. “Don’t be an idiot.”

I sigh. She’s right. But calling an Uber feels like admitting defeat after everything. My eyes scan the quiet street. Across the way, a lone figure is shuffling along the sidewalk – looks like some college kid on a night walk. An idea sparks, reckless and immediate. The device is still in my hand.

“Don’t worry,” I say, a grin spreading across my face. “Got it covered.”

Before Lila can ask, I focus on the kid across the street, select “level of intoxication” for both him and me, and hit the button.

Zzzztttt.

The effect is instantaneous. The warm fuzziness evaporates. My head clears, alertness snapping back into place like a light switch flicking on. I feel completely, utterly sober. Across the street, the kid suddenly lurches violently, stumbling sideways and nearly falling into a hedge. He clutches his head, groaning.

I chuckle, feeling a surge of illicit power. Problem solved.

Lila stares at me, her mouth slightly open, then bursts out laughing, shaking her head in disbelief. “Oh my God, James! You did not just swap your drunkenness onto that poor random dude!”

“He looked like he was heading home anyway,” I say, shrugging, though my heart is beating a little faster. It was so easy. Too easy. “Consider it... spreading the party vibe.”

“You are becoming a menace with that thing!” she says, still laughing but with an edge of something else in her voice – amusement, maybe, but also a hint of caution. “You’re getting way too comfortable playing God, you know that?”

I just grin, putting the car in gear. “Someone’s gotta do it.” I pull away from the curb, leaving the stumbling student and Bill’s house behind us. The night feels charged, different. The artifact club, the bounty, the body-swapping sex, the casual manipulation of a stranger – it’s a potent cocktail, and I’m drinking it down fast. Lila’s right, maybe I am getting too comfortable. But as the city lights streak past, the device warm in my pocket, a bigger part of me doesn’t care. This power is addictive, and I’m nowhere near ready to quit. The game is just beginning.

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