

Hence forth referred to as The Company"
A Genson High Technology Agency story
By Straycat

Preamble: Every new technology is bound to have a few kinks, but the Genson High Technology Agency has covered it's assets pretty well with a 17 page legal disclaimer and third party oversight every step of 'The Process'. And when Carl Barnes wins a life-changing lottery he finds more in store for him than just fame and fortune, he finds himself, and in such a way as he never would have thought possible.

"IMPORTANT — READ CAREFULLY: Please be sure to carefully read and understand all of the rights, restrictions, possible side effects, and breeding traits described in this End-User License Agreement ("EULA")."

"AGREEMENT: This document is an agreement between you, hence forth referred to as "The Subject", and the Genson High Technology Agency, its affiliates, and subsidiary companies (Hence forth referred to as "The Company"). By signing this agreement you, the subject, agree to be bound by the terms of this EULA. If you do not agree to the terms of this EULA you may not utilize our product. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with the results please contact Technical support. You will be given a Return Merchandise Authorization number (RMA number) by the technician. You then have 15 days from the date of this contact to return the unused product in its protective covering, the Manual and the original sales invoice to the address supplied to you."

Carl Barnes continued to read the EULA. There were 17 single spaced pages at 10-dot pitch Times New Roman font, and according to his instructions he was required to read them all. Truth of the matter is, he was almost too excited to read anything.

He had won the lottery.

No, he didn't win a million dollars, but close. He had won one of only ten completely free genetic alterations offered by the Genson High Technology Agency every year. In all, only one hundred ten changes are available per year. Ten of them are given away in The Company Lottery. The other one hundred are auctioned off to the highest bidder. The first bid this season got over eighty-five million before the second bidder backed out of it.

It was like winning a Maserati at a casino when you could barely afford a Yugo. Carl's eyes glazed over as his eyes scanned the EULA and his mind wandered on to more fun things... like what he was going to change into. He had browsed the web page before he bought his winning ticket at the local grocer and there were more things than he could imagine on it.

Any race, creed, color, or sex could be realized. And the resulting body would always be of near perfect form. He'd never have to worry about losing those extra 30 pounds he carried around with him ever again. He could be a Super hero (to limited degree), a Vixen, Adonis, a Ninja, Lycanthrope of any form, a "Vampire" (Without that pesky aversion to daylight). There were hundreds of Aliens fitting every description, Mermaids, Centaurs, Titans, creatures from every mythos, Anthropomorphic creatures (aka Furry). "Anything and everything your heart could desire (within certain limitations)" was what the web page had said.

Carl was just enough of a geek from reading online comics that he had all but settled on the Furry idea. There was this one web comic author that favored Fox's, and that comic was Carl's favorite. He could almost imagine what he's look like with a Magnum 'V' cut strutting around as a 6'5"Furry Fox man. He pictured himself a lot like Robert the Fox from the webcomic. Calm, Cool, Collected, almost having to fight the women off him.

His eye momentarily caught on a phrase on the next page of EULA he was "reading" as his mind wandered. It read: "For no resale's or exchanges, bartering, or favors curried Shall the genetic alteration be passed on to another soul, living or dead, will be permitted save for reasons of death Shall the alteration be passed upon to the next of kin documented below..."

That reminded him of all the offers he'd received just after he won the lottery. One rich old fart up in Boston offered him fifteen million dollars for the ticket. He told the guy what he could go do with his 15 million dollars, one-dollar bill at a time, sideways.

He had also received several job offers if he would consent to being one thing or another for whichever company was making the offer at the time. The Bronco's Football team wanted him to be an anthropomorphic horse-man and be their team mascot. They even offered a 10-year contract with plenty of zeros after the first number.

That one he had actually considered, but had ended up discarding. Being "hung like a horse" he'd heard was not all it was cracked up to be... then there were all the "Why the long face?" jokes he'd have to endure. However he would be practically a shoe-in if they ever made a "Belle Of The Ball" live action movie as Cavalry with his "What do YOU think?" t-shirt. That aspect of it had tempted him, that was for sure.

He flipped another unread page and resettled his glasses back on his nose. His eye caught on another phrase. "... And the subject Shall consent to The Company media liaison accompanying the subject at any and or all times for public relations purposes..."

That he'd already been aware of. He was being filmed as he "read"; he'd been filmed since approximately 45 minutes after the drawing. Even now he was wearing 'the watch' that allowed them to track his movements. After the "Alteration" they would be able to track him via some morhpic resonance the nano-bot's that caused the change... or something to that effect. He'd only half heard it. Again he'd been to excite to listen to it all.

"Any and or all offspring of said altered subject Shall inherit the genetic traits of the altered parent. The Company cannot and Shall not be held liable for any teething problems from said offspring, nor public ridicule, teasing, kidnapping and ransom demands, or public displays of affection of and from said offspring. Any mates' Shall notwithstanding be bound by this agreement with or without consent as long as such breeding is done with their full and complete knowledge of said traits." That caught his eye as he continued to scan the pages. Carl really didn't think it'd be a problem. He'd never as so much as had a date in his life, save for the one very embarrassing time he took Mary Ellen Dutchmire to the prom.

He grimaced at the memory of that. It still pained him to this day to think of how badly that one time he'd tried to take her out on the dance floor had embarrassed him. He continued to scan the EULA as he tried to force that memory from his mind with legal jargon.

“IMPORTANT: possible side effects of genetic alteration (henceforth referred to as “The Process”) include, but are in no way limited to: permanent irreversible change, death, unusual cravings, odd behavior regarding the cycles of the moon, distaste for direct sunlight, gender change (intentional or not), tanning, tan lines, and hair/limbs in unusual places. These possible side effects are considered to be understood and taken into consideration during the subjects decision as to undergo “The Process” or not. Said extreme side effects are extremely rare occurring in less than once (1) per one hundred thousand (100,000) alterations, with death occurring less than once (1) in two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) alterations (approximated). The Company cannot and Shall not be held liable in the unlikely event any such side effects, presented here or not, should occur. In the event of an unalterable change should occur, the subject Shall consent to allow The Company a minimum of five (5) years to reverse the process. Should such reversal process be unsuccessful The Company agrees to refund the subjects monetary investment at current rates of return, or at the rate at the time of purchase, whichever is more favorable to The Company, and at The Company’s discretion. Also, should at any time the subject should have a change of mind regarding the unalterable change the subject and continue, without further hindrance from The Company, in the chosen form of the subject.”

The EULA continued in dry legalese for another few pages till his eye was caught by yet another paragraph.

“In the event that the subject should wish to return to the subjects previous incarnation, barring unforeseen or known side effects, up to the period of one (1) month, or thirty (30) days, whichever comes last after the alteration, the subject can request from The Company in writing for said reversal. Should for any reason the reversal request is submitted after one (1) month, or thirty (30) days, The Company can, at The Company’s discretion, permit or disallow such reversal with or without any given reason. In the event of a hardship case presented after the thirty (30) day for a reversal, The Company can permit, with proper justification and consent from the Board Of Directors, permit such reversal at The Company’s digression. Higher court rulings Shall be taken into consideration. Monetary reimbursement Shall not occur in the case of a reversal request submitted even with proper procedures and forms provided at The Company’s expense.”

“I, the undersigned, have read the EULA completely and understand that this procedure is completely voluntary. I, the undersigned, certify that I am of sound mind. I, the undersigned, affirm that I am of legally consenting age for genetic alteration implied with “The Process”. That I am not acting under any duress, coercion, or forced action in any way, shape or form, and with my signature affirm that I am acting of my own free will, whole heartily, and agree to be bound by this agreement.”

“Printed name of the Subject:_____” Carl printed clearly his full legal name, Carl Meriwether Barnes.

“Signature of the Subject:_____” Carl painfully signed his full legal name in cursive.

“Signature of The Company Representative:_____”

“Signature of Witness:_____”

Carl blinked. Then looked up and around the room to the large one way mirror that was in the room. Behind that mirror was the video crew, the witness, and was The Company Representative. He waved, then felt foolish as he saw his reflection in the mirror. The smile he was unaware of on his face faded as

the door to the room was opened and then she walked in.

The Company Representative strutted in the sultry way of Vixens of the silver screen from a bygone age. Her lush over-ripeness entered the room as a presence and force of nature all its own. Parts of Carl's anatomy awoke from long unused sleep and made themselves uncomfortably known in his pants.

She, of course, was a poster child for 'The Process' as the EULA had referred to it. She was used in almost all of their advertising. Before and after pictures abounded on The Company website, and her smiling visage gracing the cover of her autobiography could be purchased from bookshelves all over the country for a nominal fee of \$39.99 plus tax. Of course, most of the book consisted mostly of 8x10 color glossy photos of The Company Representative in her full and barely clothed personal glory.

There were words, of course. They were included just in case someone actually got bored looking at the pictures and contained inane facts like she enjoyed sex while immersed in a bubble bath, on the crush carpeting of her stairwell at home, all hours of the night and day... various positions and fantasies. Oh, they also made reference to her "before" period of life. How she'd been a tomboy and not very popular. Usually most of these went unread, of course. They also included a rather matter of fact statement about her 'pre-alteration' attempts at enjoying sex. Her opinion prior to alteration was that sex was highly over-rated. She'd had 9 lovers before she was altered to her current form, and most of those times she was simply bored, once it was almost but not quite painful, and the only time she almost enjoyed it they had been interrupted by a police officer knocking on the window of the car they had been parked in..

Of course her autobiography also stated that since the alteration she has been completely unable to not enjoy sex... not that she has any complaints about that at all regardless of how small or unskilled her partner at the time is. It also modestly states her single longest lovemaking session lasted 15 hours with a Japanese man simply known as "Charlie".

Carl struggled for a moment as he attempted to redirect blood flow to the head on his shoulders so he could remember her name. She took the papers from him, looked them over, and then signed her name before it finally occurred to him.

Arianna Brockhouse. She was also known as Sultry Brickhouse online for the many, many fan sites dedicated to her and her likeness (wholly owned by The Company of course, and used without permission on said fan sites).

Carl finally managed to get enough blood above his collar to notice another woman in the room. She had introduced herself as Delva McClanniahah, a third party neutral and impartial observer from a respected accounting firm, Prince-Watergate or something like that. She was cute in a mousy-bookish brunette sort of way... or she would be if she was not currently squinting and biting her tongue while she signed her name, not to mention standing next to Sultry Brickhouse... Carl corrected the name in his mind before he tried to speak again... standing next to Arianna Brockhouse.

"Um... Ms. Brockhouse..." Carl stammered.

"Yes, all seems in order here. Don't you agree Ms. McClanniahah?" Arianna leaned in a very suggestive way against the table as she said this, the fire engine red business suit she was wearing parting and displaying even more cleavage than normal.

Delva pushed her round lens glasses back up on her nose and adjusted her shoulders in the gray blazer she was wearing in a feeble attempt to draw attention from Arianna.

“I concur Ms. Brickhouse.” Arianna chuckled. Carl’s nerves delighted at the sound, and more personal adjusting was required below the level of the table. “I mean...” Delva tried to correct herself but Arianna waved a dismissing hand with a smile, then turned back to the rooms’ only male, and highly aroused, occupant.

“Are you ready for your tour, Carl?” she might as well have said ‘are you ready to take me to bed and have your way with me, Carl?’ for the effect she was continuing to have on him. Carl could not trust his voice for some reason, so he simply nodded. Arianna smiled again and lead the way from the room, thrusting the door open with her palm in such a fashion that music video directors everywhere always tried to capture... and failed.

Carl was dragged behind her by sheer force of animal magnetism. His eyes locked on her posterior as the mini-skirt that formed the lower half of her suit rumbled and rolled as if two bobcats were playing under a crimson sheet. She, of course, had legs that went all the way up.

Carl was brought back to his senses by a somewhat bony elbow being jammed into his side. He blinked and wiped the drool from his lip before looking at the person belonging to the offending elbow. It was Delva McClanniahah’s elbow.

“Uh, yes Ms. McClanniahah?” he asked once he removed his eyes from Arianna.

“I was saying, that the reason the film crew were no longer following you is because The Company’s facility here is completely covered with video and audio surveillance. Should anything occur they would have a copy of it, of course.” Carl glanced back over his shoulder... she was right. About that time Arianna stopped, turned with a wicked smile on her face, and stalked toward Carl. He involuntarily backed himself against a wall with a wide-eyed ‘deer in the headlights’ look on his face. She stopped with her lips hardly an inch from his, desire burning in her eyes.

“When Delva says ‘Anything’ she of course means anything...” Arianna purred.

‘She almost touched me... she almost touched me...’ repeated it’s self in Carl’s mind several times before he remembered he had to breathe once in a while. Delva snorted in disgust and grabbed his elbow so she could lead him down the hall as Arianna turned and strutted further on down the hall.

His mind was just coming back to it’s self as he stood in the hall next to a mirror. There seemed to be some sort of greenish light about the mirror but his eyes had not cast the image of Arianna up close from them yet. He was roughly turned to face the mirror. In the mirror he saw himself.

Even his reflection was unimpressed with it’s self. The reflection was five foot ten inches, a bit portly, had posture that needed improving, and wearing black rimmed glasses, a white shirt with red plaid tie, dark blue slacks, white socks, and gray sneakers. The reflection was rather thin save for the ‘executive spread’ and pot belly it had gained from too many years of working as a lowly helpdesk agent.

The word ‘Geek’ came to mind quite easily when looking upon that reflection. Carl also noted a rather thick green line scrolling its way down the mirror. The line was rather bright and Carl guessed it was an

image capture device of some sort. Sort of a 'person scanner'. As the blood returned from his neck regions and his ears started working again he heard Delva finishing an explanation he completely missed.

There was a ringing. Arianna reached into a pocket on her suit jacket and retrieved a cell phone to answer it.

"Mushi, Mushi!" then she continued in Japanese, a rather rapid conversation. Carl had heard it enough in anime's to recognize it... not that he could understand any of it. But she seemed to speak it perfectly.

Arianna stopped before what appeared to be an elevator, and pressed a button, the conversation not even pausing while she did so. Then she turned around to face Carl again and lowered her cell phone from her ear before speaking.

"I must take this phone call. The technician is waiting for you on the fourteenth floor." She smiled. "It was a pleasure meeting you, Carl." And with a wink she added "I'll be seeing you." And off down a side corridor she was gone speaking rapidly and somewhat angrily in Japanese again.

The elevator arrived with a 'ding' and Delva led Carl into it, pressing the number 14 as she did so. Once the door was closed she coughed and looked at Carl's face.

"Why are men so enthralled with that... woman?" she asked probably a bit more sourly than she intended.

"She's not so bad... once you get to know her, I guess. She is quite a beauty, however." Delva harrumphed and crossed her arms turning back to the door. Carl swallowed and looked at Delva over his shoulder and shrugged.

"You are pretty cute yourself, you know... Not that I... um... mean anything bad by that... I just... um... well..." He stammered. Carl had never really been good with social interactions with females of any sort. He turned back to the door rather embarrassed. The silence grew until the elevator 'dinged' again then the doors opened. A rather roughish fat brown-bearded geek was waiting for them on the other side as it opened. He was somewhat forgettable save for the violently plaid shirt he was wearing unbuttoned and hanging out, only partially obscuring a black 'ales and whores' T-shirt from another webcomic that Carl also read. He was smiling.

"Hi, I'm Bob. Follow me please." He turned with a slight flourish as his shirt and long brown hair whirled about him and he plodded off. Carl followed him keeping a discrete distance from the cold shoulder he was getting from Delva.

Bob led them in to a low-rise cubical with three chairs, and plopped himself into the more expensive looking chair in front of the computer. He thumped the trackball and the screen came alive with the scans that were just taken of Carl. Then Bob turned around again as Carl and Delva took seats slightly apart from each other. Bob stuck out his hand towards Carl, and Carl took it shaking twice. Bob offered his hand towards Delva, but after a moment of it hanging there he dropped it and spoke.

"Ok, now the fun begins." He smacked his hands and rubbed them together. "What did you have in mind?" he asked with wide-eyed anticipation.

Carl thought a moment, then a moment more. He tried to speak once or twice, but decided against it. He'd already decided, he thought... why was it hard to say it now? It's not like he couldn't alter it right up to the point that it actually happens. Bob held up his hands.

"No rush, me laddy." He dropped his hands and jerked a thumb over his shoulder toward the monitor. "I can show you here about what it'll look like before you set it in stone, per se. Just name it. I'll have a go at it." Bob nodded his head with that somewhat lopsided smile on his lips.

"Um... do you know Robert the Fox by any..." but Carl was cut off by a rather loud laugh from Bob.

"Do I know Robert the Fox? By George I know him. I've been reading that comic for five years now!" Bob spun his chair around to face the computer again clicking his web browser into action. After it had come up he full screened it and hit his links pile for the webcomic featuring Robert the Fox. Without looking to Carl, Bob spoke again.

"You read today's cartoon yet?"

"Uh, no. I... I've been busy."

"Hmmm... I guess you have. Oh well. He goes into a bit of detail about yesterdays romantic interlude with that Zebra he met in the bar last week." Bob clicked his tool bar, skimming rapidly through a few tools, selected a decent pic of Robert the Fox from the page then clicked through a few more commands seemingly at random, then clicked back on the application that had Carl's scan in it.

Beside his picture was the unforgettable form of Regina Fox, Robert the Fox's betrothed.

"Hmm... Must have captured the wrong picture. That's ok. It's just for show right now anyway." Bob glanced back over his shoulder. "I can change it again later for ya." He manipulated the pictures a bit till they were the same dimensions. "Ok, watch this!" he hit the 'morph' button. Slowly the two pictures merged and flowed into one another. It was no longer Regina, but it was also no longer Carl. The picture would definitely wet the appetite of any Furry fan in the depths of the net. It was no longer a cartoon, it seemed real somehow. Bob pulled at a slider with his trackball cursor and the picture rotated. There was a soft gagging noise from the chair next to Carl that went unnoticed as Carl leaned forward to have a closer look.

"Pretty cool, eh?" Bob pressed another button on the application and the figure started walking, almost strutting with a sensual grace. It was wearing the white shirt and tie that Carl had on in the pic, and the slacks appeared to be painted on. Certain parts of her anatomy were moving under the shirt as she walked. Her eyes shone with slight highlights left over of Regina's emerald green eyes. Both men studied the figure in detail. Slowly Bob rotated the figure as it walked so Carl could get a good look at all the angels.

"Nice. Can you do the same with Robert now?"

"Sure, sure, sure. Just lemme dump this and we can restart." Bob clicked the 'Dump image' button. A small box came up in the middle of the screen for a fraction of a second... Carl could have sworn it said 'saved' but it was gone before he could be sure.

Bob reloaded the original scan of Carl, and then clicked back over to the webcomic. After a minute of nearly constant clicks and adjustments Bob switched back over to the application with Carl's scan in it again. This time next to him was Robert the Fox. A 'merge' button later and they flowed together.

It wasn't Robert the Fox anymore, but it was close enough that you could see similarities. You could see the likeness in the mischievous glint in his eyes. Bob again put the model through its paces.

Carl could tell from the figure on the screen that he'd lose about 6 pant sizes at the very least, and that he'd need shirts with broader shoulders. The figure on the screen, that Carl hoped he would soon inhabit, had that Magnum 'V' cut to it. Rippling muscles, roughish grin, mischievously twinkling eyes the same blue as Carl's were now. Carl sighed.

"It's perfect!" Carl breathed. Bob nodded enthusiastically.

"Yep yep, that's the one." Bob turned to look at Delva. She had a somewhat lost and longing look in her eyes as she gazed upon the figure on the screen. "Closet geek no doubt." he said. Then gave her the old once over and muttered "Nice Tits". Fortunately for Bob this went unheard.

Bob snapped his fingers a few times to get both of them out of their reverie, and hit the save button. Next he hit the 'features' button. The screen filled with text and check boxes next to each line. Bob filled in the required fields at the top of the screen informing the program that this transformation was a 'lotto' alteration and about a third of the boxes grayed out, while others that had been grayed out became available.

Bob clicked through the 'standard package' and added a few 'optional' boxes. Carl tried to keep up, and almost managed. He pointed at a couple the next column over and said "That one" a few times. Bob nodded each time and clicked them. A few names were tossed out and options selected or removed. Delva quit trying to keep up with the male geeks. They seemed to have a communication going that was completely out of context with her experiences. Words like "Carlton" and "Reggie", along with "Dover" and "no not Tiffany". Punctuated with an "Ooooo" or "Ack!" and "Yeah..." some times funky sounds, bird calls, and the inevitable 'when two men are left alone for too long' sound of an armpit fart.

Finally it was over.

"Done?"

"Done." Agreed Carl. They turned and shook hands.

"Well then, I just got to get the little buggers programmed and then we can start." Bob clapped his hands once. "Gladice will show you the way from here."

Gladice appeared from around the corner and walked to the cubical with a smile. She was no Brickhouse, but she was looking material none the less. She was also about 45 and had that 'Lynda Carter' perpetual hotness about her, Carl could tell even under the white lab coat she was wearing.

"If you both will follow me, please." She said indicating the hall she just came from with a proffered hand. Carl and Delva stood and followed her. Bob tried to compile the options.

‘Error! Gender incompatible options selected. Please correct before continuing.’ The computer spoke.

Bob blinked, and double-checked the options again. Everything seemed to be in order. He hit compile again.

‘Error! Gender incompatible options selected. Please correct before continuing.’ The computer spoke again.

Bob frowned. He hit ‘list’ and 8 options came up that were ‘gender specific’. Without bothering to read them Bob unchecked these, checked their opposites, and hit the compile button again.

‘Compile Complete, Dave.’ The computer spoke.

Bob looked around quickly, then took the red ‘H.A.L.’ eye out of his desk drawer and placed it back on top of his monitor. He also took the Thor’s hammer out from under his shirt, then he smiled and went back to work... surfing BDSM fetish porn.

* * *

Carl and Delva followed Gladice into a lab where there was an examination table, a chair near the wall, and a rolling stool that doctors everywhere used. Gladice indicated the table for Carl, and the chair for Ms. McClannihan. They sat.

“I need you to remove your shirt, Mr. Barnes.” Carl shyly looked to Delva, and Gladice chuckled.

“Not to worry, Mr. Barnes. Your shirt is all we will be removing here... for now.” She said with a smile. Delva hid her mouth behind her hand for a moment with an amused twinkle in her eye.

‘Well, all for it then’ Carl thought as he removed his tie and started unbuttoning his shirt. He had a plain white tee shirt on under it, he draped the shirt at the foot of the exam table, and Gladice moved it to the countertop.

She then proceeded to give Carl a complete physical. Carl’s temp was taken, his blood pressure (which was slightly elevated for some reason) and his pulse (which was also a bit fast). She checked his ears, his pupils response to light, his reflexes, and checked the glands under his jaw.

When it came to the ‘Turn your head and cough’ bit Carl balked.

“But, but, you said...” Gladice smiled and looked to Delva, then back at Carl.

“She is the official observer for this alteration, Mr. Barnes. I am sure she will not think any less of you for it.” But even as she spoke a crimson blush was creeping up Delva’s face.

Carl was speechless. Gladice sighed.

“You can stand between her and I so you do not have to embarrass yourself, Mr. Barnes. I am a trained professional, and I assure you that there is nothing about you that I have not seen a hundred times before.” She shook her head slightly as she spoke.

‘You haven’t seen mine before’ Carl thought. But he stood and took a step toward Delva who had moved back further and up against the wall. He turned so his back was completely towards her before he released his belt and worked the button and zipper so he could drop his slacks and briefs to his knees.

‘Nice butt’ Delva thought as Carl gasped slightly at the cold hands of Gladice. After he coughed twice he yanked his pants up rather quickly, forgetting to pull the zipper up.

Gladice, smiling, made a few notes on a clipboard. Delva tried to keep a look of slight disinterest on her face, and Carl tried to get dressed again without looking at either of the two ladies in the room.

Once his shirt was back on and fastened he sat down again draping he tie around his neck.

There was a muffled chuckle from Delva. Gladice looked toward Carl, smiled, and then zipped his pants up for him.

He blushed, and muttered a “Thanks.” under his breath.

Gladice opened a small mini-fridge in the exam room and pulled out two containers, one noticeably smaller than the other one. She handed these to Carl.

“Um...” Carl looked at the containers slightly baffled.

“One is for urine, that would be the larger one. The other one is so we have a sample of your genetic legacy prior to the alteration. We need an unaltered sample incase you wish your offspring to be unaltered, Mr. Barnes.”

She said it in a slightly amused, but completely professional way. Carl blushed again, but Gladice saved him from having to talk by pointing to a lavatory in the corner of the room. Carl coughed and went into the lavatory, locking the door behind him.

After he discovered the door had a very good seal around it, he tried to find the light switch.

* * *

“So, did you see anything you liked, Ms. McClanniahah?” Delva blushed slightly.

“I am simply here as an unbiased observer Ms. Gladice.” She said somewhat primly, her cheeks slightly rosey as she said it. Gladice smiled.

“And did your unbiased observations conclude that Mr. Barnes has a nice tush as well, Ms. McClanniahah?” Gladice chuckled and Delva giggled sheepishly, flushing even more.

“Me Too.” Gladice said with a wink.

* * *

The smaller container was a little easier to fill considering the state he was in when he entered the

bathroom. Actually he kind of needed that right then. Carl waited a few minutes after he did his business to fill both containers to the best of his ability and secured the containers. He didn't feel like looking like a circus freak after walking out of the bathroom.

When he opened the door again he thought he heard giggling, but when he looked at the two women sitting there they were both mostly strait faced with only slight smiles.

He decided, wisely, not to ask. He then handed both containers to Gladice who regarded the smaller container with a slightly surprised look. She then secured both containers in the fridge again.

"This way please." Gladice stood and lead the way from the room and down the hall to the next set of tests. The room was surprisingly like the one he'd read the EULA in. There was a table, two chairs on opposite sides of the table, and a large one way mirror on one wall that was beside the table over looking it so neither occupant of the chairs would have their back to the mirror.

"Mr. Barnes, if you will take a seat I will return after I have seen Ms. McClanniahnan to the next room so she may observe the next set of testing, please." Carl took the chair closest to the door.

"This way, Ms. McClanniahnan." And Gladice escorted her from the room. About a minute went by when Gladice returned carrying a clipboard and a banker's box. She took the other chair setting the box on the table away from the mirror.

Gladice removed the cover of the box, looked at her clipboard, and then removed the first test from the box.

They were triangle shaped colored puzzle pieces, white and red. Gladice took out a picture and set it on the table.

"Please make this shape only using these pieces, Mr. Barnes."

He looked at the picture, it looked fairly simple. He started arranging pieces and after a moment he realized it was a tad more difficult than he first thought. Getting the pinwheel design just right was tricky, but he managed it after a few false starts.

Gladice looked at her watch and marked the elapsed time. She then removed the next test pushing aside the first one. Then removed another picture from the box.

"Please arrange these according to this chart, Mr. Barnes."

This test was not quite as hard as the last one, and Carl finished fairly quickly.

Gladice again marked the elapsed time on her clipboard, then removed the next test. To Carl's surprise it looked like a child's 'which-shape-goes-here?' board. In truth, that is exactly what it was; the label was still pasted to the side of it.

Carl had that done in seconds, and was almost embarrassed that it took him that long mainly because it was an isosceles triangle not an equilateral triangle.

Gladice wrote the time on her clipboard again and brought out the next test. It was a piece of paper. On

the paper it had “The Stupid Test” written across the top, and a large circle cut into 4 pieces. In each section of the circle there was a different image: upper left was 9 crosses of varying sizes, upper right was a barn with a rooster on it, lower left was a creek with two stick figures on one side and trees of some form on the other, and lower right was a maze that didn’t touch the edges of the section with a building on one side and a stick figure on the other.

“I am going to read you the instructions for each stage of this test, Mr. Barnes. Please complete the instructions to the best of your ability.” She removed a small box of crayons from the box. “You may use these when you need to write on the test paper, Mr. Barnes.” She looked at Carl; he had a somewhat dubious look on his face.

“Are you ready, Mr. Barnes?” Carl opened the crayon box and choose the most offensive color he could find and grunted. “I need a positive affirmation of your readiness please, Mr. Barnes.”

“Yes, I am ready, Ms. Gladice.” She looked at her watch and marked the time, then begin reading the first set of instructions to him.

“In the lower right corner of the test, Jimmy left his hat at church, please mark the easiest route for him to get back to the church to get his hat without crossing any lines.”

Carl looked at the maze and after about 2 seconds he drew a line from the kid around the maze to the building that he figured was the church. Gladice marked the time.

“In the lower left corner of the test, Frankie and Bobby wish to cross the frozen river in the middle of winter to pick apples. What would be the safest way for them to cross, Mr. Barnes?” Carl arched an eyebrow and with nary a second past he spoke.

“Apples do not grow in winter, Ms. Gladice. They will have to wait for warmer weather for the apples to grow and then swim across.” Gladice wrote his answer and the time down.

“Upper right corner of the test, there is a rooster on the top of the barn facing north, if he lays an egg, which side of the barn will it fall off of, Mr. Barnes.” Carl snorted in disgust.

“Roosters do not lay eggs, hens lay eggs, Ms. Gladice.” Gladice wrote his answer and the time it took him to answer.

“Upper left corner of the test, please circle the largest cross in the test, Mr. Barnes.”

Carl looked at it, then looked at it again. After a moment he circled the entire test. Gladice made note of that as well.

“Last instruction: please circle ‘The Stupid Test’ and sign ‘your name’ at the bottom of the page please, Mr. Barnes.”

Carl blinked, then looked at the page. He circled the title of the test, then at the bottom he wrote in cursive ‘Your Name ‘ then passed the test back to Gladice with a perfectly strait face.

Gladice wrote this on the clipboard as well, picked the test up and attached it to the clipboard, and chuckled.

"I do not believe I have ever seen some one complete the test quite like you have, Mr. Barnes. You seem to have a rare talent."

"The whole bloody test was nothing but a trick question, Ma'am. Once I saw that it was easy to out fox the creators of the test."

"Most people just follow directions, Mr. Barnes, they do not solve problems as well when given directions to follow."

"I work tech support, Ms. Gladice. Problem solving is my forte. Usually the simplest solution will fix the problem, if not it will lead to the next simplest and so forth until the problem is solved." Gladice smiled.

"Remind me to have you set the clock time on my VCR, Mr. Barnes." She winked.

* * *

Carl sat on the bed of a modestly appointed motel room inside the company building. It was one of more than 20 on this floor. He was not allowed to leave the room without escort, but with the entertainment's provided he doubted that he would be leaving for any reason. There was a high-speed Internet terminal that he highly doubted that was unmonitored. A TV, which had at least 500 channels. An AM/FM/XM/CD/MP3 radio. A mini-fridge that was stocked as per his personal tastes. A phone that was tied directly to a friendly and somewhat sexy sounding attendant that would see to his room service upon request any time of the night or day, and a Jacuzzi tub with shower in the full bathroom.

He had also been left a set of requirements for his Internet usage. He could not Blog, write personal emails that described in any fashion what so ever what he was in the process of going through, he could not post of foreign boards or chat with foreign nationals. He could reveal NOTHING of what was entailed in "The Process".

Any mistakes would be taken as "Breach Of Non-disclosure Contract" and he would be sued, sequestered, and have a gag order slapped against him from Superior Court, and breaking that would be a Federal Offence.

There was a very long list of very bad things that would happen to him should he violate the gag order.

He was not told in so many words, but he also guessed that the room was monitored with hidden cameras and microphones. Not that he'd had plans to do anything note worthy, but he figured any masturbation he'd need to be doing should Arianna Brockhouse happen to walk past his room, would be done in the shower with the curtain closed and water running.

Carl gave the bed an experimental bounce for no other reason than he thought it was expected of him. He had been informed of one thing he was required to do each and every day, and that was drink 2 'milkshakes' that were loaded with nanites.

"These Nanites are the 'Construction Crew' if you will. They are inert until activated by the 'Forman' nanites that will be injected into you when the time arrives. The 'Construction Crew' hold none of the instructions for genetic alteration, so should you change your mind prior to injection we could release

you immediately without jeopardizing our ‘Process’. The nanites would then be purged from your body in the normal fashion over a period of time without ill effect on your personal being.” He’d been told by a rather officious lab tech that had escorted him to the “motel”.

“How do you know they won’t affect me should I leave?” The tech laughed when Carl had asked that.

“I drink the shakes for a week at least once a month, and am genetically tested after every rotation. I have had zero degradation or alteration in the 2 years I have been doing so. I have been electrocuted 3 times, on accident mind you, and nothing has ever activated the nanites.” The tech looked rather smug as he’d said it, and then he also added as an after thought: “The ‘Construction Crew’ are standard medical nanites and no corporate information can be gleaned from them. As a matter of fact it would be cheaper for a competitor to buy their own medical nanites that it would to try to recover any from your personal being, Mr. Barnes.” That had not really been much of a relief to Carl.

“Why do I have to drink the shakes twice a day for a week?”

“To build a blood level saturation, Mr. Barnes. Once the blood level saturation of nanites has reached a particular parts per million it will be safe to proceed with the alteration.” Carl looked concerned for a second before the tech continued. “Any less and the full utilization of the ‘Forman’ nanites will not be achieved and the alteration will fail. The nanites will abort and no alteration will be achieved. We have discovered that for all but the largest adults the blood level saturation achieved by two shakes a day for one week is more than sufficient.”

“Does that blow my lottery slot then?” the tech shrugged.

“Don’t know. We have never had it happen before, at least not since the FDA approved it for human testing, I mean. That’s as long as I have been here.”

“Were you one of the test subjects?” the tech snorted.

“Hell No. Not that I would have minded, but I was an assistant laboratory technician at the time, I would not have qualified.”

The tech had locked him in the room an hour ago, and now Carl had nothing on his agenda for a week except drinking 2 shakes a day, eating, sleeping, bathing, and jerking off.

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“Oh Carl, I could never love another man! Kiss me you fool!” Arianna breathed seductively in his ear as her naked form caressed his skin. Her hand was slowly working it way before his navel.

They kissed with the passion of lovers long separated, tongues flickering between their mouths like snakes fencing with foil and saber. Carl skin burned for the longing of her touch as he lay on his back in the motel room.

With slow deliberance Arianna lowered Carl’s zipper and reached inside for the prize she’d been longing ever since she first laid her eyes upon his visage. She grasped firmly and pulled it from his pants.

The sensation in her hand spoke of something different than her libido told her would be there, she looked at what was in her hand. There was a shocked cry as she all but jumped from the bed.

“What my Sultry Brickhouse? What is the matter?” Carl asked as the look of horror overtook Arianna’s face. Carl looked down to his fly.

There was a rather bushy Fox tail hanging out of it.

Carl gasped and looked to his lover. Delva McClanniahahan stood there now, all prime and proper in her gray business suit with a mildly amused look on her face. She covered her mouth and giggled while pointing at his lap.

Carl snapped his head toward the mirror that was beside the TV set. It had warped, it was no longer square and the edges seemed to move changing its shape constantly, it was also dark as pitch. He jumped from the bed, his clothing shredding from his body from the force of his movement, and ran for the bathroom mirror.

It was still there. The lighting was stark, the room perfectly white where he seemed to recall there had been teal involved someplace. He stood before the mirror willing it to reveal himself, for all he saw in the mirror was another bathroom.

He climbed over the sink and through the mirror, hoping there would be a reflection waiting for him on the other side. He turned and faced the mirror again, his glasses sliding down his snout.

He raised a paw to resettle them again. The reflection slowly faded into view. He was a fox.

Not a human-fox anthropomorphic creature, but a normal fox wearing rather geeky glasses. He turned and there was Bob sitting at his desk in the corner of the bathroom. Carl jumped up on Bob’s desk and looked Bob in the eye.

“Oh, hey Carl. Liking the new body?” he asked in an offhand manner.

Carl tried to answer, but all he heard was a series of yelps, whines, and short barks.

“That’s what you asked for wasn’t it? To become a fox. Well I won’t say it was easy, but I did it. I guess you’re the first. Look at this list of people that want to become pets? More than I can do in a year already.” Carl looked at the screen. There was a list of names scrolling faster and faster across the screen. He tried to ask if he could be changed back, this isn’t what he wanted. He wanted to remain Man shaped and become a fox, but again all he heard was barks, whines and yelps.

“Oh, no can do daddy-oh. I have too much porn to surf to be doing that kinda thing.”

Carl in shock turned to the crowd of people in the studio audience that started laughing and pointing at him.

He jumped down and ran over to Letterman’s desk, which seemed to be 10 feet tall. He jumped and just barely made it, he had to scamper to keep from sliding back off of it. He looked at Letterman whose teeth seemed to swell to the size of footballs as he smiled back at Carl.

Carl felt cold, glanced down and realized he'd lost his fur, but he was still a fox. He tried to cover his genitals with his paws.

Carl sat bolt upright in bed drenched with sweat. He threw off the covers and ran for the bathroom, flipping the light on as he entered.

There in the mirror was the same Carl he'd known most of his adult life. He turned on the cold water and splashed some on his face. He looked back in the mirror. The image now had a wet face, but it had not changed otherwise. He ran a hand through his somewhat thin hair and the image obliged him with the same movement. Carl sighed.

"Fucking nightmares. Why couldn't it be the one from high school with the play? Why did it have to interrupt..." He looked around, then back at the mirror.

Something in the back of his mind reminded him that he was not truly alone here. He shut his mouth.

* * *

Unseen by Carl down in the security room one guard passed the other guard a \$5 bill.

"Why do you always get to pick the 'Brickhouse Wet Dream', Greg? Why can't I get it once in a while?" the other guard grunted.

"Cause I has seniority, Danny, that's why."

On of the monitors Carl had turned from the mirror and headed back to bed after drying his face off on a towel and turning off the light.

* * *

Freddie from Queen and David Bowie sang in the background, lamenting the pressure they were under. The bass line had been "borrowed" by a failed white rap artists many years ago, and had long since faded from the limelight. Carl surfed on the Internet terminal, catching up on his webcomics.

Robert the Fox was in trouble, as usual. Apparently he and the zebra had gotten it on and she missed her period. Regina was still clueless, but he and Bruce the Bear were trying to figure out how to tell her. Bruce was simply "Fabulous!" and queer as a three dollar bill, not that you could tell by looking at him or listening to him talk about anything other than his 'partners'.

In other comics: Torg and Riff were up to their usual high jinks. The Skunk with the porn studio job, glasses, and love of Ameiga's had a broken computer. The Dinner Table Knights were wrestling the LAW-NAZI for the Magic Dice to decide their fate, and PVP Online was doing another Hero's City bit.

Carl sighed and looked at the clock. He'd been 30 minutes reading his email and catching up on his entire load of webcomics.

He Googled random words for a while, that ate up another 15 minutes. He surfed Ebay for anything

that came to mine and found another Russian submarine for sale there. That made three this year alone. He spent a few minutes reading that listing as it was quite thorough.

It also had a bid on it from the Confederate Navy, a private citizen that personally owned the worlds 4th largest military force on the planet, the third biggest navy, and the second most advanced air force.

That man was buying up F-14's since the Raptor's had replaced them a few years ago, and with the F-14's came the Phoenix missile system.

Carl was getting bored, and it was only his second day.

* * *

Delva McClanniahhan stopped by just after lunch on the third day, which was a nice change Carl thought

"To what to I owe this honor, Ms. McClanniahhan?" he asked from the chair next to the Internet terminal. She squared her shoulders and almost managed to look disinterested.

"I was informed that your sleep was disturbed the other night, Mister Barnes. I was asked to come up here and see if you had reconsidered your alteration."

Carl thought about the other night. It was not so much the changing into a small woodland creature that bothered him, nor ending up on Letterman's desk without his fur. It was having the other half of the dream interrupted that bothered him so much, now that he was awake enough to regret not having been able to finish the dream.

From somewhere far back in his past his social graces called to him.

"Would you care to sit?" he proffered his hand toward the bed since it was the only other surface in the room a person could comfortably sit upon. Delva looked at it, looked at him all comfortable in the chair, thought something naughty before her mind could stop her and blushed slightly as she took a seat on the bed.

Carl, being nearly blind in the 'being able to read body language' department missed the slightly guilty smirk and the blush in her cheeks.

"Thank you, Mr. Barnes."

"You're welcome." He then looked at a neutral point in the carpeting trying to decide if he should tell her about the dream, if he should mention the nightmare. If he almost wished she'd been the one in the dream, and then maybe it would not have become a nightmare. He was quite for a while considering what to say next, rocking back and forth in his chair.

"The mind sometimes reveals inner doubts and fears through dreams, Mr. Barnes. There is no shame in admitting when they frighten you."

"Please, call me Carl. Mister Barnes is what everyone always calls my father, and before him it was my grandfather that was Mister Barnes."

“Alright... Carl.” He looked at her. It was custom after all to exchange first name permission. He waited. She finally caught the implied hint. “You may call me Delva.” She said it a bit stiffly, but Carl didn’t notice, he just nodded and resumed staring at the floor trying to find the words.

“Well, Delva, I really don’t know what to say. I mean... it was just a dream, then it went twisted. Something went very wrong and... well.” He shrugged.

“Do you wish to tell me what happened?” she asked genuinely concerned. Again, Carl missed it.

“Her and I were making out when I turned into a normal fox. I climbed through the mirror in the bathroom and ended up on Letterman’s desk without my fur. The audience started laughing.”

‘Her who?’ Delva asked herself, but she was pretty sure she knew. Her eyes narrowed and she straitened her back, which also went unnoticed by Carl.

“It was kinda like the dream most people have in high school where you have to stand up in front of the whole school on stage and you don’t notice you forgot your clothing till you reach mid stage.”

“And before that? You were making out with her?” That came out as an accusation, and this time Carl almost caught it.

“Yeah.” He glanced at Delva seeing the cold look in her eye and he guessed mentioning Arianna would be bad. He looked over Delva slowly.

Despite the padded shoulders of her suit jacket, frizzy ‘80’s hair style, and sneakers, she was really quite beautiful when not in the same room with Sultry Brickhouse... Arianna Brockhouse, he corrected in his mind.

“She looked a bit like you, really.” It was a gamble, either she would call his bluff and get all prissy or...

Delva blushed and lowered her gaze. ‘Bingo.’ Carl thought with a smile.

“Not that I’m trying to imply anything Ms. McClanniahah. It was just a dream after all.”

“No, it’s ok. Dreams are just... dreams, after all.” She was not about to mention the dream she’d had last night. Her dream was not interrupted by a nightmare and involved the second image Bob and created on his computer, soft candles and ‘mood music’.

There was an awkward silence for a moment.

“Do you still wish to continue with ‘The Process’, Carl?” He shrugged.

“One dream is not about to be ruined by a nightmare. Yes I plan to continue with ‘The Process’, Delva.” She sighed softly to herself.

Delva was not particularly a Furry Fan, but after seeing what Bob had conjured to the screen by mixing the best traits of Carl as he is now and the cartoon character of Robert the Fox, she was considering

looking into it.

Well, “Considering” was the wrong word for it. She had decided and just not gotten around to it yet would be the better way to put it.

“I guess I can inform The Company that you wish to continue then.” Delva said, and Carl nodded.

After a moment Carl smiled and looked at Delva’s face, which had a soft glow about it in the subdued lighting of the room. Something warm rose inside of Delva. ‘He has such a nice smile’ she thought, but it was not he smile, it was the look in his eyes, the way he was looking at her. No one had looked at her quite like that in a very long time.

Without really realizing it she blushed, and returned his smile.

They shared a long moment gazing into each other’s eyes.

The moment was ruined by the untimely arrival of room service knocking on his door, with Carl’s lunch and second shake of the day.

Carl went to the door and opened it, letting the young black waiter push the cart into his room.

“Um, next to the TV is fine, thank you.”

The waiter removed the tray, platters, the two drinks, and set the flat wear next to them. When the waiter turned around he seemed to notice Delva for the first time and put his hand over his mouth.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t see you there. I’d hate to think I was interrupting something.” He giggled slightly and pushed the cart from the room, grinning back into the room. With a wink at Delva he added.

“Caught yourself a cutie there dear.” And gave Carl a meaningful once over as Carl closed the door.

Carl shook his head, not quite sure which person that last comment had been meant for. Then slightly embarrassed he walked back to his chair.

Delva fiddled with her hands while looking at them for a moment, then stood. Carl stood back up as well.

“Well, I guess I should be going then. Your lunch being here and all.”

“Yeah. Um. Yeah.” After an awkward moment Delva stuck her hand out and Carl took it. Her hand was warm and soft. They shared a smile.

“Would you, um, be coming by tomorrow then? If you like that is.” Carl asked some what nervously. Delva blushed again.

“I might. If I happen to be in the area, that is. And if it wouldn’t be too much of a bother and all.”

“No, no. No bother at all.” Carl tried hard not to blush, and failed.

Another moment passed.

“Till tomorrow then?” Delva asked.

“Yeah. Tomorrow.” Carl answered with a slightly foolish grin.

Delva decided she’d need her hand back if she was going to leave, not that she really wanted to but...

“Um... yeah. Tomorrow then.” She let go and Carl released her hand.

“Tomorrow then.” They shared another smile and Delva reluctantly turned to leave. Carl walked her to the door, and opened it for her. The waiter was standing outside apparently listening at the door.

“Oh, Excuse me!” and he pushed the cart off down the hall. Delva giggled foolishly and Carl chuckled.

“Well. I guess I will see you tomorrow then.” Carl said.

Delva smiled and walked away fixing her hair as she walked.

Carl watched her walk away eyeing her somewhat longingly, then shook his head and closed the door.

* * *

One guard passed the other guard a \$5 as then watched Carl climb into the shower, dinner as of yet, untouched.

* * *

The same waiter delivered dinner that night. He smiled in a knowing fashion that almost bothered Carl, but nothing was said between them.

After eating dinner, Carl lay on the bed staring off into space. He was trying to get a grip on his emotions. While Ms. McClannihan was there his emotions were kind of jumbled and confused, like there was something he needed but didn’t know how to ask for it.

It was like a missing piece of himself had just been found, but he wasn’t sure how it fitted into his life.

Well, his mind conjured a few ways to ‘Fit’ them together and it took a minute to get it reigned back in before it went too far and he needed another shower.

Carl had to admit, while he had read a lot on the Internet, seen his share of dirty movies, and looked at quite a lot of images both hand drawn and digitally captured... he’d never been with a woman before.

Oh, sure, he’d made out with Mary Ellen Dutchmire before the prom, but she never allowed him to put his hands anywhere but her back, her hip, and her hands. While that took a lot of the fun out of it, what really ruined it was the attempt at dancing. People with no rhythm were even laughing at him, he was so bad at dancing. He had paid the DJ to play a slow song and everything, at least slow dancing he had practiced alone at... But someone must have paid the DJ off to make him look like a fool, and it

switched in mid refrain to a fast beat pop song.

He could still hear them laughing after he ran out of the gymnasium and got into his Chevette to drive away. He didn't. He had waited for Mary Ellen to come out and try to make him feel better. Maybe take him out to Lover's Lane for a little romp in the woods... but that didn't happen.

He had come to realize she was the one who started laughing first and drew every one's attention.

Carl rolled over on his side and looked toward the window. It was covered with mini blinds, and through them he could see the subdued lighting of the city. He stared at the window for a long time until sleep finally caught up with him.

Half an hour later the waiter came back to get the dishes. Security had told him that Carl was asleep so he was very quiet as he unlocked the door and then gathered up the utensils and platters. When that was finished he looked at Carl lying there fully clothed and uncovered. The waiter sighed softly and went to the closet for a blanket, then covered Carl up with it. He pushed the cart out the door and locked as quietly as he had entered.

* * *

Carl was awakened by the same waiter that had interrupted his conversation with Delva the previous day. He also found that he was covered by a blanket that he did not remember getting out of the closet.

"Good morning, sunshine! Breakfast for two and Coffee! I hope we slept well last night!" the waiter gave him a knowing look which Carl failed to understand at all.

Carl sat up and looked around. There were only the two of them in the room, and he had no intention of sharing breakfast with a waiter. He looked questioningly at the waiter but he was not awake enough yet to form words.

"Oh my goodness, you must do something with your hair! It's an absolute fright!" the waiter dug in a pocket and pulled out a comb and set about fixing Carl's hair. After a moment and the movement actually registered in Carl's caffeine deprived brain he waved his arm around trying to get the waiter off him.

"Security said to me on my way up here that you 'might' be expecting company today. They also told me just as I reached the door that said company had just arrived and was on her way up here right now." The waiter smiled and waited a moment for the words to sink in. When they did Carl's eye lit up like flash bulbs.

"Here?" was all he could manage. The waiter nodded. Carl tossed the blanket off him and stumbled for the bathroom.

"My name is Phil, by the way. It's my week to look after your room and two others." He said as he folded the blanket up, clutching it briefly to his chest and smelling it. It smelled like Carl, he sighed. "Security made sure I knew how you liked your coffee." Phil folded and placed the blanket in the closet, hearing the usual morning sounds of a man in the bathroom. "I took the liberty of having it mixed and ready for you this morning." He said as he took up the ready-made mug of blessed caffeine and thrust it through the partly opened door.

It was nabbed almost instantly and happy slurping noises echoed from the bathroom and Phil went to make the bed up. He glanced at his watch. About 2 more minutes left. He set out breakfast on his cart so it could be used as a table between the bed and the only chair in the room. He looked at it critically and adjusted the daisy in the vase he'd brought with him.

Satisfied he boldly walked into the bathroom to help. Carl was brushing his teeth, most of his coffee already drank. One sock was falling off, his shirt was untucked, and his pants were undone. Phil helped himself to tucking in the shirt and was quite please his subject didn't object too much with the toothbrush busy at work and all. Next Phil retrieved the tie and draped it around Carl's neck just after Carl finished rinsing his mouth with Scope. Phil straitened Carl's collar and then hurried out of the bathroom closing the door behind him. He arrived at the outer door just in time for the knock. He opened the door and of course Delva was on the other side of it.

"Hello Ms. McClanniahah. I was just delivering breakfast." He smiled and stepped out of the way for her to enter. Somewhat taken aback by finding the same waiter here yet again, she entered. "There is fresh coffee for you, I hope Kona is acceptable. We have it flown in every week from Hawaii." He smiled again.

"Um... Thank you." Delva took the chair this time. Phil readied a cup for her and poured.

"Now you just say when, dear." When the cup was 75% full Delva said 'when' and helped herself to the sugar and cream. "Well, everything is finished for me here. Have a good day, Ms. McClanniahah." He gave a short curtsy, which finally clued Delva in as to which team he played for, and then Phil turned to leave, stopping just outside the bathroom and knocking theatrically on the door.

"Oh, Mr. Barnes! Your guest is here and waiting for you!" he smiled back at Delva.

"Um, thank you Phil." Phil beamed another smile and a quick thumbs-up to Delva and hurried out the door, closing it behind himself.

Carl spent 10 more seconds trying to calm his nerves. He gave up, picked up his coffee cup, and tried to walk out of the bathroom as if having a gay waiter shove his hands down his pants was an everyday occurrence, and nothing to be bothered with. He smiled a fake kind of smile that people put on when they really don't feel like smiling but feel it's required.

As soon as he turned to look at Delva, who was in her usual gray business suit but had her hair down and a noticeable amount more makeup than he'd seen her with before, which is when his smile became a genuine smile.

"Good morning. I was not actually expecting you until later." Delva blushed. 'Dammit, it's the makeup I know it. It's giving me away!' she thought flustered.

"Well, I just happened to be dropping a report off and thought I would come by and see you. I can come back later if now is not a good time..." she feared for a moment that he'd ask her to do exactly that. Her fear was, of course, unfounded.

"No, no. Now is fine. I was, um, just about to have breakfast, actually." He thought about it for a moment, seeing that she already had coffee and that there were two place settings already out. "Would,

um, you care to join me then? For breakfast I mean.” He was painfully aware of the fact he had one sock on, and the other was tucked in his shoe, on the far side of the room under the window, and that while his shirt was buttoned and fully tucked in, the tie was simply dangling around his neck.

“If it would not be too much trouble.” She said coyly as she had already been eyeing the bacon and eggs.

“No, um, no trouble at all. Phil seems to have anticipated something like this. I see there is already two helpings of everything.” He tried to nonchalantly take a seat on the bed and position himself so he could use the cart as a table.

They ate in silence, both too nervous to say anything. When they were down to coffee and crumbs the silence grew pressing. Both tried to speak at the same time, a chorus of ‘no, you first’ followed, then Carl insisted that ladies should go first. Delva nodded then almost chickened out of talking altogether. But after a false start managed to get the words out.

“I was reading Robert the Fox the other day.” Carl paused in his coffee drinking, quite surprised. She didn’t seem the Furry type.

“Really? How long have you been reading?”

“Um, just last night. It seems I have a lot to catch up on.”

“Mm hmm.” Carl finished taking his sip of coffee “It has been running for at least 7 years now, and usually posts three times a week, if not more... except for Con weeks when he catches up afterward. We fans usually don’t mind.” They shared a smile. And then talked about the cartoon for a half hour before Phil showed up to take the breakfast cart away without a word, but a pleasant smile on his face and a hidden wink to Delva.

They continued to talk about the various webcomics they like and why they like them.

They talked about their jobs.

They talked for hours.

Phil brought lunch and they were still talking, but at least Delva had lost that stuffy gray suit jacket, and Carl lost the tie but still had only one sock on.

Phil took lunch dishes away and they were still talking, Carl sans socks completely now.

Dinner came and went and they were still talking, about politics this time.

Phil removed dinner dishes a while later and they were discussing science and space flight.

About 10pm Phil brought them a nightcap of champagne, and then bid them a good evening with another knowing wink that Carl actually caught this time.

He blushed furiously at that.

When they had finished the bottle they were both a bit tipsy.

“Well, it has been a pleasure talking with you today.” Delva said flushed almost scarlet.

“Yes it has. I hope we can do this again tomorrow.” Carl was also a bit flushed.

Delva stood a bit wobbly and retrieved her jacket; Carl helped her into it letting his hands linger on her shoulders. When she turned around to face him her glasses were a bit askew. Carl’s manhood made its self known again, and Delva could not help but notice.

After a moment of gazing into his eyes she hugged him tentatively, and he returned it tenderly. They stood there for a few moments, neither daring to move.

When Delva finally pulled away it was with regret that she must. They held hands for a moment, then released each others hands.

“Let me show you to the door.” Carl finally ventured. Slightly uneasy on her feet Delva nodded and followed him to the door. “Will I see you tomorrow?” she smiled.

“I think I can be persuaded to visit.” She said with a very pleased smile on her face. Carl’s hands were almost shaking. He knew that he shouldn’t, but he had to try. He leaned forward and Delva all but leaped into his arms. Their lips touched and fireworks went off. It was tender, passionate, and lingering.

It was the best kiss Carl had ever had. When he finally came up for air he was almost gasping for breath. Delva was in the same state, and then in an embarrassed rush she opened the door and hurried out, all but running for the elevator.

Carl stood there for a moment, not quite sure what to make of her exit, then closed the door.

“Next stop, the shower.”

* * *

Arianna Brockhouse had been watching the monitors for the last hour or so. She had seen it coming even if they had not. She also felt very lonely.

These kids deserved each other, and she decided that she’d be damned if company policy was going to get in the way of that. As soon as she had watched Carl’s naked form climb into the shower she checked to see where Ms. McClannihan was. She was in the elevator. Arianna punched a command into the computer. The elevator slowed, stopped, and reversed direction without the occupant noticing. Delva was a bit too caught up in her inner turmoil to notice.

Torn between her growing feelings for Carl, and her job as an unbiased observer. Was she willing to throw her career away for a man who was awaiting a complete physical alteration of his personal being solely because he was unhappy with his real self? This plain and ordinary man that made her feel warm all over each time she looked into those big blue eyes of his?

The doors opened and she stormed out, not noticing at first that she was not in the lobby, but a

short hallway leading to a penthouse apartment. She paused at the door, which was ajar. She reached for the handle when a voice inside spoke. Delva jumped.

“It’s open. Do come in, Ms. McClanniahah.” With a trembling hand she opened the door and stepped inside.

The apartment was lush and appointed richly. She slowly walked in further to what appeared to be a living room draped in reds and gold’s. Flowers were strewn everywhere from adoring fans from all over the world.

“Um, hello?” Arianna walked out of the kitchen with a glass of scotch in a one hand, and a rather skimpy black negligee on.

“Please, come in. it is not often I have visitors, Ms. McClanniahah, make yourself at home.” Arianna took a seat in a love seat. Delva looked apprehensively around and selected a likely couch on the other side of the table from Ms. Brockhouse.

Arianna smiled and took a health swallow of scotch, then looked meaningfully at her jacket.

“Do loose the jacket, dear. This is an informal meeting in my own home.” Delva shuddered inwardly, scared of what she thought was going to happen.

‘I am so fired’ she thought as she slowly and awkwardly removed her jacket. Arianna set scotch to her lips and after a second took another swallow, then set her glass aside.

“I do not know how you do it, Delva. Is it alright if I call you Delva?”

“Yes, Ma’am. Delva is just fine.” Arianna smiled again.

“Well, Delva. I threw the best moves I had at that boy the other day, and you managed to drive me from his mind with seeming ease.”

“I...” tried to protest but Arianna held up a hand.

“As every one knows I am seeing someone. I have no interest in trying to concur poor little Carl and steal him from you. Relax.”

“He is not mine to be stolen from, Ms. Brockhouse.” She said somewhat primly. Arianna smiled.

“I think you might be mistaken there.” She chuckled. “You of all people should know that We, The Company, monitor everything having to do with The Process, Delva.” She pointed a finger toward her desk, the monitor still showing Carl in the shower.

Delva blushed.

“Oh come on. It was just a kiss. A very nice kiss by the looks of it from here. But just a kiss none the less.” She leaned forward and parts of her anatomy tried to escape from her negligee, but not quite managing it. On second thought Arianna stood up and strutted to the very nervous Delva sitting

on the couch. She deposited herself onto the couch with a calculated flop and draped her arm around Delva in a single motion, pulling her closer.

If this had been a porn movie, the music would have started about now, and Arianna was certainly dressed for it.

“Girl, that boy hasn’t stopped thinking about you since he met you.” Delva looked wide eyed and shocked into Arianna’s eyes. Arianna chuckled and slid a finger down Delva’s shoulder in a very suggestive fashion, that despite the alcohol Delva could not help but feel aroused by.

“It is, however, against company policy to allow relationships between employees and third party observers.” Delva was crushed, and started to cry.

“I... I... I didn’t mean it. He’s... He’s such a nice guy... and... and... I’m so lonely!” Arianna pulled Delva close, placing her face on Arianna’s shoulder, and gently rubbing her back.

“I know, dear, I know.” She sighed. “You do not know how much I understand. Had I met a man like Carl before I had my alteration, I never would have bothered.” She pushed Delva back a little bit so Delva could look up into her eyes, then smiled. She pulled Delva’s head close and kissed her soundly on the forehead, then looked her in the eyes again. Delva’s glasses were askew again, and her hair was a mess.

“You are a lucky woman, Delva dear.” A look of puzzlement crossed Delva’s face, makeup smeared from the tears, and then she sniffed.

Arianna pushed a stray hair out of Delva’s eyes, then hugged her. After a moment Delva returned the hug. Arianna was a very warm person, literally, and very soft. Quite pleasant to hug, really. Delva managed to stop crying.

“Are you sure you will still feel this way for him after he’s changed?” Delva almost jumped. She hadn’t thought of that, hadn’t allowed herself to admit her feelings. I mean, how could she feel that way about someone she had only known a few days? Her mind raced, but it seemed to already know the answer. She just had to allow herself to find it.

She absently rubbed a hand across Arianna’s back. Arianna, of course, wasn’t wearing anything under the dress, and it would have shocked Delva if she had.

“Yes. I think I will, feel the same that is.” She said it over Arianna’s shoulder, nestling her cheek against the soft, warm, and inviting skin of the most beautiful woman in the city. Arianna gently pushed Delva back into view after wiping a tear from her own eye, and smiled at her.

“Then I won’t tell if you don’t tell.”

“You... You mean?” Arianna nodded and smiled again. “Oh!” and they hugged again.

Arianna couldn’t help herself; with the warm flush of happiness Delva’s bra just ‘happened’ to come undone with the slightest touch.

“Oh My!” Delva pulled back and tried to cover herself. Arianna chuckled.

“It’s my fault. Old parlor trick, I couldn’t help myself.” She said with a wink. Delva couldn’t help but laugh.

“Well... If you are going to seduce that tasty piece of man meat down there, you are going to need a better wardrobe. You are an absolute fright, girl!” she rubbed her hands over Delva’s shoulders. “And you must learn to relax and feel sexy!”

Arianna took Delva’s hand and stood, helping to pull the slightly tipsy Delva to her feet. When Delva had regained enough balance, Arianna led her to the bedroom. Mainly naughty thoughts occurred to each of them, and both secretly thought they would enjoy them... ‘But it is not to be’ Arianna thought as she led Delva to the closet where her extensive wardrobe was located.

She positioned Delva in front of her full-length multi-segmented mirror, and placed her chin on Delva’s shoulder.

“Grey is not your color. Hmmm... with that hair, and those eyes... Yes, I think I have something.” Arianna reached around and started unbuttoning Delva’s shirt, touching her breasts lightly with her arms as she did so. Delva stood still, and swallowed.

‘If Sultry Brickhouse is taking a personal interest in me, it could only further my career... not to mention if it would help me with Carl.’ She gritted her teeth and straitened her back. Arianna could see the change in Delva’s face and read it like a book. She could do anything she wanted with Delva right now, and she’d be perfectly willing. She was putty in Arianna’s hands.

‘Oh, the pity...’ she thought, as none of that was in her plans this evening. Of course, her plans are always changing.

She divested Delva of her shirt, and the bra that was still loose beneath it. Delva had somewhat small, but perky breasts, and her nipples were hard enough to cut glass.

Slowly Arianna unzipped the skirt that Delva was wearing, and let it fall to the floor. She was also quite surprised at what she found... a red thong. After rubbing an appraising hand over Delva’s rear, and giving it a playful slap which cause Delva to jump and giggle slightly, Arianna turned and wandered through her extensive collection of sexy outfits.

“Hmmm... Definitely red!” she said as she gave Delva an appraising leer from a few yards away. Delva was still standing still and look at herself in the mirror.

She had seen, and felt, what was under that negligee Arianna had on... nothing but Arianna. If she had a body like that she’d flaunt it too. Comparing that to what she actually had to work with she really couldn’t see what anyone, even Carl, could see in her when he had the choice of women like Sultry Brickhouse... Um, Arianna Brockhouse, she corrected in her mind.

Arianna chuckled and selected a rather fetching dress she had only worn once, and probably never wear again. Not that there was anything wrong with it. No not at all, matter of fact everything was right with it... and it was also featured in several pictures of her in her autobiography, which was the main reason.

Arianna was a lot taller than Delva, and where as on Arianna it hit rather high on her thigh, on Delva it would hang a bit lower, and not quite be filled out as much.

She sighed, and turned to strut over to Delva.

“Arms Up!” Delva complied. Arianna, barefoot, stood on her tiptoes to get the dress over Delva’s arms, then lowered it on her. There was a little bit of adjusting to do, a tuck here, a push there. Then Arianna stepped back to look at her work.

“Hmm... Turn around, let me see you.” Delva turned slowly so Arianna could get a good look, and ended up facing her. There was a wicked glint in her eye, but whatever thought behind it went unspoken. “Yes, Shoes...” and Arianna was off again looking in the sea of shoes that made up one whole side of her wardrobe. She glanced to the silly pumps Delva had on, and then considered the effect a good pair of shoes would make.

She ran her finger across a row as she walked, and stopped at the prefect pair. They were way too big for Delva, but that didn’t matter. This was about getting the look right. Fitting would come later.

“Left.” She said, and discarded one offending gray pump, replacing it with a red high heel.

“Right.” Delva tried to keep herself steady, and ended up having to grab the side of the mirror before she could raise her right foot. Again Arianna discarded the gray pump and replaced it with a red high heel. She walked around her creation, not trusting Delva to try and walk in shoes at least three sizes too big for her.

“Hmmm... wait here.” And she left Delva looking at herself in the mirror. She almost couldn’t believe the difference. Ok, the bust was way too big for her, but it hung rather nicely on her, she felt a sexiness she hadn’t before, almost as if a bit of Arianna was rubbing off on her.

Arianna returned a minute later with a makeup case and several brushes. She’d never been big into dolls when she was a little girl, and now she was beginning to understand why all the girls she had known enjoyed them so much. But this was all that much better! This was an actual person, a sexy and attractive woman with warm and soft... She tried to get her mind away from the fun bits and back on business.

She placed the tools on the table beside the mirror and pulled out the stool and helped Delva sit on it without falling over. Then it was down to the business of brushing.

“My goodness, girl. What have you been using?” Delva told her and she almost gasped. “The Horror! We have got to get that crap out of your hair! Kick off those shoes!” Delva did and stood, Arianna shocked her by pulling the dress over her head and tossing it negligently into a corner. Delva looked to Arianna and saw that same evil grin as she was dragged off to the bathroom around the corner.

Arianna left Delva standing in the middle of her spacious bathroom and started the tub running.

“Off with the Thong!” Delva was surprised and didn’t move. “You are not getting in the tub with that thing on.” Delva started to reach for it, but stopped. “Oh, please!” and walked over to help

Delva out of it. Delva still did not resist, and Arianna caught a good sniff of Delva's wetness, it stirred her, but she resisted again... This was not supposed to be about her.

The Tub was filling fast with bubbles and warm water, and seeing that telling Delva to climb in would be nowhere near as much fun. She pulled her negligee off and tossed it into the corner, then took Delva's hand and all but dragged her into the tub that seemed to be built for 4 people.

They both settled in on opposite corners, into reclining seats that were built into the tub. As Delva relaxed it occurred to her that this was probably the very tub mentioned in Brickhouse's autobiography, not to mention more than a couple of pictures.

The water turned it's self off automatically when it reached a certain depth, the water was Very warm.

Arianna watch Delva slowly relax and soak in the warmth, and calculated the right moment to make her jump again. When that moment came she reached over and turned the Jacuzzi on in the tub.

The bubbles hitting her backside almost brought Delva out of the water.

"Ooooh! What was that?" Delva asked then giggled as it started to tickle her.

Arianna chuckled, then pressed another button twice. This button would be just as much of a surprise, but would take a few minutes to arrive.

"Just relax, and you'll see why I love this tub so much." Arianna chuckled a wicked little chuckle as the vibrations of the pulse-jets started to have their usual effect on her.

They both relaxed and let the gentle whine of the pump, the deep massaging pulse of the jets, and the tantalizing vibrations of the Jacuzzi carry their cares away. Arianna counted down and right on schedule Reginald walked in with two very tall glasses of champagne, and the bottle in an ice bucket.

His deep rumbling voice startled Delva as she had closed her eyes. Her eyes went wide and she sank deeper into the suds seeing a large black man standing not a few feet away from her completely naked form, separated by only a few bubbles.

"Anything else Ma'am?"

"No my dear, Reginald, not right now."

"Would Ms. McClanniah care for anything then, Ma'am?" Arianna chuckle wickedly and glanced over at Delva who was nose deep into a bank of bubbles.

"No my dear, Reggie. I think Ms. McClanniah will be fine after you leave." Reggie chuckled and with hardly a glance at Delva turned and walked away.

"Of course, Ma'am. Good evening." And then he was gone.

"How did he know my name and that I was even here?" Arianna took a champagne glass, took a sip, and then looking archly at Delva. Delva blushed.

“Oh... yeah.” Arianna handed her the other glass with one bubble-covered arm.

They relaxed, drank champagne, and giggled as both the bubbles beneath them and the bubbles inside them tickled all the right places. They had a much more profound effect on Arianna than they did on Delva, as it was part of her alteration. Her pleasure center was cranked to high output and nearly everything aroused her. Just sitting in the tub she could have an orgasm if the pulse-jets were turned up to nearly full.

Arianna swam toward Delva through the bubbles with only her head above them like a hungry shark, pleasure in her eyes and naughty thoughts on her mind. She settled right next to Delva and started caressing her. Delva giggled and set her champagne glass aside, allowing herself to be caressed. She figured it was part of cleaning ‘that crap’ out of her hair, and couldn’t be bothered to resist.

Arianna became emboldened and her caresses became more sensual. Delva simply relaxed more and ‘Hmmm’d with contentment. The kiss came as a slight surprise, but was enjoyed none the less. Their tongues played softly against each other as Arianna pressed her ample bosom against Delva’s relaxed form.

* * *

Morning rose with golden rays of sunlight playing across her body, warming with a feather light touch. Delva smiled, and rolled over so the sun could warm her backside, but there was a body there, a warm soft body.

She opened an eye and there with a very contented look on her face, was Arianna Brockhouse, nestled up against Delva... and they were both completely naked.

Delva tried to work the cobwebs out of her head, and slowly as wakefulness found her again she started to remember.

“Well, that was Fun.” Delva blinked and Arianna was looking into her eyes, and then gave her a good morning squeeze before rolling over to head to the bathroom. Delva found the sheets on the floor at the foot of the bed, and began looking around for camera’s or her clothing.

“Don’t worry, there are no camera’s in here... that are on anyway. I keep them off when I have company.” Delva almost sighed in relief, but caught herself when she remembered Carl.

“Oh, No! I promised I’d see him today!” she put her hand over her mouth. There was a chuckle from the bathroom.

“And you Shall, my dear minx. Just not like that...” she stuck her head out of the bathroom with a wicked grin. “At least not at first anyway.” Then disappeared again.

Delva tried to come to terms with what had occurred last night, she recalled more and more as she thought about it, and could never remember saying or doing anything that might have stopped it.

She also remembered deciding to go with anything that happened as long as it helped her with Carl.

As she thought about it further, she didn’t actually regret any of it, it was, after all, very pleasant.

She tried to feel guilty about something, but it didn't seem to want to stick. She thought she should at least feel bad about that, then, but after the way she felt last night and waking up the way she had she just couldn't manage it.

She ran her hand through her hair, which was now straighter than it had been in years. She sat trying to collect herself and feel worse in some way for a while when Arianna returned with a coffee mug in each hand and a terry cloth robe about her.

"Here, try this. It's Kona, from what I understand." Delva's hand stopped mid reach and she looked up into her lovers' eyes. Arianna smiled. "I know the help."

Delva took the mug and with one hand clasping the sheet to her she sat back and drank, the fog lifting slowly as she did.

"Shopping... you had said something about shopping." Delva recalled from last night between sessions.

"Hmmm, yes I did, didn't I? Well, if we want to catch that man you are so interested in we had better quite dawdling and get going, now shouldn't we?" Delva gulped the coffee down and set the mug on the nightstand, which knocked over a bunch of toys that had gotten used last night. Her hand jerked back... she'd forgotten about those, especially the neon 'Ron Jeremy' with three-way vibrating action. Her thighs still quivered at the memory of it.

With an evil laugh Arianna yanked the sheet away from Delva who tried to cover herself for modesty, and then Arianna dove onto the bed and crawled up to Delva and kissed her soundly on the lips, a long and lingering kiss. Then she rolled over and took Delva's hand, pulling her from the bed.

"Come, Come! Well, we did that last night, Muhahaha!" and led Delva into the wardrobe again. Each looked for something to wear, and it was much easier going for Arianna as she was used to all this frippery as Delva's prim and proper mind tried to classify it.

She stood looking back and forth between a green evening gown, and a racy little blue thing that she didn't even have a name for when Arianna strutted over already dressed in another of her 'barely covered' dresses.

"Ooooh... Good taste, but not for this morning." She waved a 'no-no' finger, then pointed to a yellow sundress that had some lacing in the back. "That one."

It took about a minute to get it on the previously naked form of Delva, and yet another minute to find the missing thong that matched it. Another minute of adjusting the laces and it almost fit Delva's petite form, it was still a lot roomier in the bust, but that couldn't be helped. Then it was the mirror and the brushes for 5 full minutes each. They took turns and enjoyed themselves.

They sat next to each other for a long moment kind of holding one another, looking into the mirror as they did so. Both were contented, and happy as they had not been in quite a while, and both secretly felt slightly guilty as each had a man in their lives that they had feeling for... but not guilty enough to ruin the day for them.

There was nothing they could do for it, the pumps had to be used as they were the only shoes in the penthouse that would fit her feet, and then they clanked up the steps leading up to Arianna's waiting copter. Delva was being led by the hand, and she didn't mind too much. Mostly she worried about any witnesses and what they would think.

Truth be told, they'd seen a lot of women being led around by the hand, and not all of them were lovers, most were 'just friends'. Some were even family. No one gave her a second... well, ok, no one gave her a third look.

Arianna leaned forward to the pilot, exposing an excess amount of cleavage as she did so... which was probably one of the reasons the pilot loved his job so much, and told him where he was flying. Arianna then lent back out of his way and took her seat. Delva had mischievously pinched her bottom as she was lent over, and received a slap on the hand and wicked grin as payment. They fastened their seatbelts and Arianna gave the pilot a thumbs-up that he saw in the rear view mirror he had installed some time ago just for that purpose... and to better enjoy the show.

They were airborne 10 seconds later and Delva 'Ooo'd' and 'Ahh'd' the whole flight... and some of it was from the sights too.

They landed, and were escorted into the building by a well-dressed man in the same sort of gray that Delva had previously worn. What he thought of her pumps remained a mystery as he led them into a private fitting lounge.

"Madam will be with you in a moment, Ms. Brockhouse. Would you care for some coffee while you wait?"

"Yes Adam, my usual. Ms. McClanniahnan here takes hers with two sugars and dirty blonde." Arianna chuckled. Adam nodded and walked out.

"You're the dirty blonde I'm into this morning." And Delva slapped Arianna's hand playfully. They shared a giggle.

A minute or so later Adam returned with three coffees and a tray of cookies. He placed these on the coffee table and with a bow he left.

Madam Gutierrez was in her 60's and was resplendent in little a saffron number that had to be a one of a kind. Arianna almost ran to her and kissed her cheek when she entered. Then dragged her back to the coffee table.

"Maria, I want you to meet my friend, Delva Anne McClanniahnan, Prince-Watergate." They shook hands.

"A pleasure as always to meet one of dear Arianna's friends, Ms. McClanniahnan. I do say, Dublin is it?" Delva blushed.

"A small suburb of Dublin, yes Ma'am. That is where my family is originally from." She was rewarded with a smile.

"Ah, Charming. Please, let's drink before it gets cold." They sat and drank, consuming a cookie or two each in the process.

“So, what may this humble artist provide for you this morning?”

“Humble my left nipple, Maria.” They shared a short chuckle “I need a stunning little gittup for toots here so she can woo the man of her wet dreams... and we need it quick.”

Madam Gutierrez raised an eyebrow.

“Quick you say? How quick?”

“Like inside the hour, if you have something that could be altered that fast.” Delva was shocked. Last time she’d had anything altered it took several weeks to get wrong, then another couple weeks to get it unscrewed up but still not the way it was supposed to be.

“Hmmm...” Madam Gutierrez tapped a finger against her lips and looked Delva over. “Let me have a better look at you child.” Delva stood and did a slow pirouette. “Hmmm... 32c, 28, 34. What size shoe do you wear, child?” Delva told her and she nodded. “The perfect size for you, I should have known.”

Madam Gutierrez stood and walked to what looked like a bookshelf, which swung out of her way as she approached revealing a very large wardrobe. Maria disappeared into it for a minute. Arianna entertained herself with Delva’s nipple, making sure to hide it again before Maria returned. Delva didn’t care for being teased like that, but didn’t fight too hard.

They had settled back down when Maria returned with a stunning white dress on a hanger.

“Come, come, we have no time to waste.” Delva and Arianna shared an evil grin and walked over to Maria. The backs of the ‘bookshelves’ were full-length mirrors. “Well? Take that off girl, we cannot fit you wit that old thing on you.”

Delva started undressing as Arianna protested.

“Old? OLD? I got that from you not two months ago!” Maria chuckled.

“I never look back, darling; it takes away from the now.”

Delva kicked her pumps to a corner once the dress was off and Maria sighed in relief.

“Here, you help her into this, I’ll just go get the shoes.”

There was a bit more teasing, and not all of it was Arianna’s fault, but the dress made it on. Maria waited out of sight till all the foolishness was over... for now, and returned with the shoes. They of course fit, and of course went perfectly with the dress.

Maria snapped her fingers and a half dozen women appeared and started fussing with Delva’s hair and putting makeup on her, nothing too heavy, just the right hints here and there. 20 minutes later the work was finished and Delva finally was brave enough to open her eyes and look in the mirror.

She had been pretty in the yellow dress, and beautiful in the white one... now she was simple stunning!

“Wow...” she couldn’t think of anything else to say. Maria laid a hand on her shoulder.

“Hmm, yes, if I do say myself. White is a good color on you.” Arianna snuck up behind her and put her hands around Delva waist, and put her chin on her shoulder.

“I hate to break it up, but you do remember why were doing this don’t you?”

“Eeek!”

“Right. Maria, babes, love ya, gotta go!”

“I’ll just put it on your tab then, darling. Go, go, woo him and try not to get the dress dirty when he takes it off you.” And with a wave she left.

Delva looked in vain for a second for her pumps, and then saw the yellow dress on a hanger wrapped in plastic for travel. She grabbed the dress, Arianna grabbed her, and off they went again, airborne a couple minutes later while the pilot reminding himself, yet again, why he loved his job... and the paychecks were nice too.

* * *

Carl rolled over and looked at the ceiling, then counted to ten. Just as he hit ten there was a knock at the door. He smiled, and got up to answer the door. Of course it was Phil, but he had no cart with him, instead he had a largish box obscuring Phil’s smallish frame. Carl arched an eyebrow as he strained the glasses on his nose.

“I have been sent to ask you if you would care to break your fast with the young lady, Sir.”

“Uh, Um... Sure, yeah. I’ll ah, just get dressed then.”

“I can help with that, Sir. I was asked to bring these for you.”

“What’s with the ‘Sir’ crap, Phil?” he asked as he stepped back from the door letting Phil into the room. “After yesterday I should almost think I owe you a kiss for how, uh, close we got there for a moment.” Phil’s eye shone with a mischievous light.

“Nothing personal, Sir. I was just trying to help.” He glanced down at Carl’s fly. “Looks like I missed the good parts, though.”

“Gah, is everyone here so narrow minded?” Carl chuckled as he stripped off his white button down shirt. “So, show me what’s in the box then.”

Phil did and Carl was half expecting it to be a joke. Then shrugged and let Phil help him into the outfit.

* * *

Arianna massaged Delva’s shoulders to clam her as they sat in the living room of her penthouse, breakfast spread before them on the coffee table. There was a chime from the computer on the desk

across the room.

“That’s them. Quick! To the window!” Arianna dragged Delva off the couch and over to the window overlooking The City. The sun was shining and would back-light her for the perfect touch of elegance. They fussed for a moment, and moved a stray lock of hair before Arianna decided she had to go.

She did so with a big and somewhat sloppy kiss, which Delva had to wipe off with the back of her hand. Delva waved as Arianna opened the door to the other bedroom in her suite. The main door opened, and Arianna disappeared without a sound.

There was Carl, and her breath caught.

If her breath caught, then Carl lost his almost for good.

He was in a white polo shirt, blue jeans that cost more than his company scooter, and a pair of tennis shoes that could pay for a good meal at any five-star restaurant.

Carl walked forward, his glasses slipping down his nose. Delva had the same problem and the corrected it at the same time. She stood and waited for him at the window, slowly he approached, as if to make sure it was not a dream, or another damned test.

“Hello Carl. I thought you’d care to join me for a change.”

“This, this is your place?” She smiled.

“No, it’s a friend’s. She is letting me borrow it for the day.”

“Must be some friend.”

He was close enough to touch now, but she resisted. ‘Why? Why not just... But food first.’ She held a hand out in the direction of the food.

“Shall we?” she asked with a smile. He returned the smile and followed her to the table.

They ate in silence, both too nervous to talk, which both thought was strange for different reasons. Carl thought it was strange because they had spent a great deal of yesterday talking about anything and everything, and Delva considered it strange because of what all had happened after they had talked, and how she had learned to relax and just let things she wanted to happen, happen.

Of course, if you consider breakfast yesterday went almost the exact same way, it wasn’t strange at all.

When they were down to coffee and crumbs the silence grew pressing. Both tried to speak at the same time, a chorus of ‘no, you first’ followed, then Carl insisted that ladies should go first, again. Delva consented and resolved not to chicken out on him.

“I, uh, I have had a little bit of time to think about yesterday.”

“Yes, I know I have thought about it a lot. I didn’t get much sleep last night because of thinking actually.”

“I didn’t much sleep either.” She admitted with a nervous chuckle. “And I got up early so that I could go shopping for this dress, and only made it back here in time for breakfast.”

“Your friend must like you a lot to let you use her penthouse like this, room service and all.”

“We, uh, we are pretty close.” She swallowed and hoped he didn’t press the matter. She had no idea how he’d take it that she’d slept with, and more than just slept with Arianna Brockhouse, the Sultry Brickhouse of the City!

In the other room Arianna was chewing her knuckles and trying not to scream out ‘Fuck him already!’ as she watched on the remote security viewer built in to her laptop.

Another long silence passed, and Delva finally pulled a play out of Arianna’s playbook, and stood up as Carl looking at her with a question in his eyes, which almost turned to alarm as she walked around the table and sat next to him, her thigh touching his.

There was a muffled ‘YES!’ from the other room that was unheard due to the sound proofing the apartment had installed into it.

Delva placed her hand on his thigh, it was very warm, and the soft denim caressed her palm as she stroked her hand against his thigh.

Carl suddenly realized he needed certain adjusting, but was unable to pull his eyes from hers. Without noticing it, they both slowly leaned in toward each other. When their lips met the floodgates of passion blew completely open, and people four floors away could feel the magic.

Arianna watched, unable to keep herself from watching. She started playing with herself, then when fingers wouldn’t suffice anymore, she looked around for her toys.

And couldn’t find them. She wasn’t in her own bedroom where her coveted neon ‘Ron Jeremy’ was. She was in the guess bedroom with nothing more than a wireless laptop tied directly into the hottest live lovemaking session she’d been witness to since her record setting time with Charlie...

“And nothing but my dammed fingers. Oh well...”

* * *

Carl awoke as Reginald set the shake on the nightstand. Reggie held a finger up to his lips and pointed to the sleeping form of Delva under the covers. Carl smiled, and found he couldn’t move and as she was sleeping on his arm.

Fortunately, Reggie had brought him a straw, and then withdrew without so much as a word. Carl drank his shake as best he could given his position, then snuggled down and went back to sleep.

* * *

Reggie met Arianna out in the living room, and handed her the much-missed toy. She took it with a happy squeak and gave him a hug. Then asked her question.

“They asleep yet?” Reggie nodded.

“Again, by the looks of it. I made sure Mr. Carl got his shake, Ma’am, and left without waking your friend from last night.” She playfully slapped his arm with her toy.

“You’re not supposed to peak when I’m playing.”

“Mr. Charlie never said anything of the sort, Ma’am, when he hired me.” He chuckled softly. She pretended to be shocked, the chuckled as well. Then she looked toward the door to her bedroom door.

Fortunately after the first hour they had moved into the bedroom, freeing their unknown hostage from her captivity and allowing her to get on with her workday, even if it was a few hours late in starting.

“Remind me to have a secret entrance added to that dammed spare room before I do something like that again.”

“Yes Ma’am.” Reginald’s baritone rumbled in slight southern twang.

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They awoke early the next morning, made love again, and then started their day. First with a bath, and Delva had figured out how to use the spa’s command console and turn the jets on. She stayed away from the one with the champagne glasses on it.

They dried each other off, and got dressed reluctantly.

Breakfast arrived shortly after that with a surprise guest pushing the cart.

And just why would Phil be up there?

“Arianna?!” Carl almost spilled his coffee all over himself as he jumped to his feet. Delva was almost as surprised, but figured she shouldn’t be.

“Hello Carl, Delva. Good morning to both of you. I hope you slept well.” She added with a knowing wink.

Carl blushed furiously. He had no idea that Arianna had basically engineered the whole thing for her entertainment... except the whole ‘getting stuck in the spare bedroom without her toys’ bit.

“Yes, Ms. Brockhouse, we did, thank you very much.” Delva answered a touch colder than she intended. Arianna chuckled and started to dispense the food, making a point of it to poke Carl in the waistline forcing him to sit down still flabbergasted. Delva took the queue and sat next to Carl on the couch, leaving the love seat for Arianna.

They ate in silence, it seemed the right thing to do. Arianna was almost busting at the seams with pride. It was almost as much fun manipulating men for other women as it was just manipulating men for her own use... what ever they might be at the time. Mostly entertainment as they made fools of themselves trying to get in her panties.

The fact she hardly ever wore panties was lost on most men, and was also well documented in her autobiography as well, for anyone bothering to read the words.

Coffee and crumbs stage and Carl coughed.

“You never did tell me your friends’ name, Ms. McClanniahnan.” He said, looking into her eyes.

“Nancy Pruett. She out of town on business Carl, didn’t Delva tell you that?” Arianna answered before Delva could more than open her mouth to say something. “How odd... she told me and asked if I would care to join you this morning for breakfast and coffee.” She smiled and flickered a glance at Delva, who, unlike Carl, was on the ‘In’ when it came to the very secret language of female sign language.

“Yes, um, Nancy. How could I have forgotten to mention Nancy?” she said, laughing a bit nervously.

“Oh?” Carl looked between the two women, starting to suspect he’s the butt of an elaborate joke... which is the usual status of all men if more than one woman happens to be in their life... Ever. And since you’re born to a mother, and a nurse usually handles all the babies in the hospital, you’re pretty much screwed for life if you’re a guy.

Arianna chuckled.

“She’s fashion designer and in Paris for a couple days. She allowed Delva there, pretty little thing, to borrow that dress just for this occasion as well as her apartment.” She grinned over her coffee and snuggled up on the love seat.

“And I suppose your one of her clients then?” Carl asked shrewdly, and with a flip of her hand Arianna answer.

“But of course I am, I must have the best you know. Why, I bet that bedroom wardrobe is just chock full of clothes she’s made for me.” Carl believed her; he’d had a look during one of their breaks for biological functions... like lunch, the other day.

“Ok. So, what did you wish to talk to me about today, Ms. Brick... Brockhouse.” He corrected himself almost too late, but Arianna smiled and chuckled. Then set her coffee cup down so she could get down to business.

“Yes, Carl. As you well know, unless you’ve lost track of time and misplaced a day, today is the fifth day you have been with us.” Carl nodded, not quite sure what that meant. He took Delva’s hand, he was getting nervous and her touch calmed him. Some part of his mind suggested that he could even resist Arianna’s charms should she hit him full force and stripped naked right now. Of course another part of his mind agreed, and was more than willing to give it a go, even if he couldn’t. It’d be a good show at least.

Another part of his mind, seemingly outside himself, suggested he better get his mind back on the topic and out from under Arianna's skirt. The second part asked about her panties. The third part said she didn't wear them, then closed up.

Carl had never read her autobiography, he was unsure how he'd know that then.

He shook his head and said

"So?"

"So, there are things you have to do today. An appointment you have with an interviewer? Ring any bells?" Delva put her hand over her mouth. She'd forgotten as well, and her drab gray suit was nowhere to be found.

"Uh, um. Yeah, I guess." He looked at Delva, who had recovered for the most part. Then he noticed something particular. Both women were sitting in a similar fashion, turned slightly sideways, knees together with their bare feet up on the couches. He didn't quite know what the meant except it must be a 'female' thing he wouldn't understand.

He was probably right, for once.

"And we have got to get you groomed and dressed for the occasion. While that outfit..." she gave him a hungry once over, he swallowed. "Is just fine with hanging out with a friend... Chatting all night... it just will not do for a possibly aired TV interview."

He and Delva both straitened up their glasses, Arianna blinked. She was not quite sure she just saw that. They even wore the same style frames. She gave up and stood.

"Come, Come, Muhahaha. We have got to get you dressed. Reginald will escort you to the tailor here have waiting for you."

"Reginald?" Carl asked.

"Nancy's butler, the tall chap that brought you the shake last night." Carl made an "oh" shape with his mouth, and Delva looked confused at him.

"It was while you were sleeping dear." Arianna said casually. Delva snapped her head back to Arianna, and Carl looked from one to the other, missing the unspoken conversation as it was happening while he wasn't looking. "So he told me this morning..." she added quickly.

Reggie walked in the door. He was skilled at listening for his queue, and arrived exactly when he was needed.

"Ah! Reginald, dear. Do escort Carl here down to the groomer, please."

"Yes Ma'am." He proffered a hand toward the door. "This way please, Sir." Carl turned to Delva

"And you? Aren't you coming?" he still hand not let go of her hand.

“She’ll be along in a few, you must let the girl rest some time dear boy.” Arianna chuckled evilly. Carl blushed, and Delva slightly as well. A retort was on her lips but held back for the moment. Arianna noticed and was pleased. ‘She’s learning. Good.’

“I dare say there might be something in that overblown closet that might fit her.” Arianna came around the coffee table and took Delva’s arm. There was an electric shock that ran up her arm that was not wholly unpleasant. She blinked, but didn’t let go.

“Well, ok then. “ Carl squeezed Delva’s hand and released it, walking to the door and following Reggie out. He glanced back just before he was all the way thought the door.

When it had fully closed again Arianna broke the silence.

“Wow. Did you feel that when we were all touching?”

“I... I think he was wearing wool socks?” Delva said unsure of her comment.

Arianna shrugged and dragged Delva back into her wardrobe and stripped her. She had a lot of fun doing it too, and teased and played with things that people normally do not let you play with.

Quite to Delva’s surprise there was a cleared section of wardrobe that has a full set of new clothing on it. As she reached for one as a hand slapped her naked rear and she jumped because of it. There was a wicked chuckled and some sloppy kissing noises, but both women managed to get dressed again... after a few tries at keeping all of their clothing on anyway.

* * *

Carl was outfitted with a sensible charcoal gray business suit jacket, matching slacks, bright red tie, saffron shirt, and brown leather dress shoes. There was even a handkerchief in the jacket pocket that matched the shirt.

He was currently sitting in a room exactly like the one he’d read the EULA in, and done the logic testing in... it could even have been the same room, but he thought this one was on a different floor. He was reading the script they had given him, not word for word, but more of a guild line of what he was allowed to say and not say.

He looked it over again, straitening his glasses as he did so. The outline also had a short list of possible questions, but nothing was concrete. There was a question on his hobbies, his taste in music, and the last time he was with a sexual partner... stupid questions like that really. He was pretty sure that he’d be skipping that question if it came to it.

He wiped his sweaty palms on his pants. He was nervous. He’d never been interviewed before; no one had ever thought him interesting enough to interview him. Not even when he was a witness to an accident had he been interviewed.

He looked up at the mirror on the other side of the table from him. He knew there were cameras there, and he knew they were filming him... but why did the thought of sitting across from a live person and answering question make him nervous then?

He'd been filmed constantly... well, almost constantly, since he got here. At least he was pretty sure that Nancy Pruett's apartment was unmonitored. 'Oh God... what if it was monitored? That'd be a celebrity sex tape that would be a hot seller, and Carl would likely never see a dime of it.

He wiped his palms again. He decided that if he could get a minute alone with Arianna Brockhouse he'd have to ask her about Nancy's apartment. He took a drink of water from the glass they had left him.

'Its times like this Carl, old buddy, that I wish I'd just stayed a helpdesk geek'... Of course, if he had he never would have met Delva and they never would have... well...

He wiped his palms on his slacks again, and a voice sounded over and intercom.

"Mr. Barnes, they are ready for you now."

* * *

He was standing next to Arianna just off camera while the lighting was adjusted. 'Now or Never, old buddy...' he told himself.

"Um, Ms. Brockhouse?" she turned to him.

"Yes, Carl? What may I do to... I mean for you?" she said with a grin.

"I wanted to ask you a question... If you don't mind that is." A quick look of surprise registered on her face, but it quickly gave way to curiosity.

"Oh?" she asked, Carl swallowed.

"I'm not sure exactly how to ask this, but... Is Nancy's apartment unmonitored? Cause you know... I, uh..." She chuckled.

"Is that why you are so nervous, Carl?" He nodded. She looked around and then took Carl by the elbow leading him away from the cameras a few feet. Then she seemed to consider what she was going to say before she looked him in the eye. That was a first, normally her words were out before anything was given to them... Especially if they were flirtatious in nature. She signed.

"No, they are not unmonitored." His eyes went wide, but she continued before he could get his voice back. "But I am the only person that has access to that video feed." She said it like that was supposed to make him feel better.

"I am not exactly sure that makes me feel any better, Ms. Brockhouse." She frowned.

"Cut the Miss crap, Carl. You know my name and I insist that you call me it when we are not in public." He looked at the stage crew with a wry grin on his face. "Oh, they don't count. They are not listening to us right now." She sighed and looked away for a moment.

"I know I'm a horrid flirt, and I know I hit you with both barrels as they say. But you have some one

more interested in you that you could ever be in me.” She lowered her eyes. “I... I never had anyone that cared for me like that before I joined the company.” She looked back into his eyes and placed a hand on his shoulder. “You are a very special man, Carl, and nothing that is going to happen in two days is ever going to change that.”

Carl blushed. The most beautiful woman in the entire city just paid him the ultimate compliment. He lowered his eyes, which just happened to put them inline with a lot of cleavage. Interesting as that cleavage was, he looked back up into her eyes, and saw a tear. The person behind the cleavage was far more interesting than the cleavage ever would be... and he was sure if he ever said it out loud that they would revoke his ‘manhood’ membership.

“Thank you, Arianna.” She smiled. The stage director called over the PA, interrupting the conversation.

“Ms. Brockhouse, if your done flirting with that young man could we have him for a few minutes? You can rip his clothes off after the interview.” She put her hands on her hips and said really loudly

“Oh, yeah? What if I want to rip them off during the interview?”

“Well, it would help the ratings, but I think Mr. Barnes there might have a cardiac arrest of you did that.” He chuckled, Carl blushed, and Arianna got a wicked grin on her face and snickered.

A stage hand came over and led Carl to his place in the lights, a comfortable looking chair next to a coffee table at just the perfect height to bank his knee now... and he found that out the hard way.

“Ow! Dammit...” he chuckled, rubbed his knee and sat down.

At least the chair looked comfortable. It wasn’t. A makeup lady came over, took his glasses off and powered his nose a bit. Then she puffed his cheeks a time or two each and replaced his glasses.

He sneezed, and tried to keep from touching his face. The makeup lady moved behind him to work on his hair.

The gaffers adjusted a few lights to minimize shadows, and a tech came over to fit him with a wireless mike. It was put in his shirt pocket with a lead coming out for the pickup, which was clipped to his collar.

When all seemed in readiness the interviewer come out. She was a comely lass of about mid thirties, just as Carl was. She looked as if she’d had at least one child, but that was only if you knew what to look for.

Carl, having spent considerable time on the net looking at various pictures for nearly 20 years, was pretty sure he could tell the difference.

The makeup lady abandoned her attempts to get Carl’s hair to behave and moved to a subject she knew so well it only took a minute to get all the required ministrations over with.

An apprentice brought each of them a glass of lukewarm water and placed it on the table. He’d been warned about this, it was so condensation wouldn’t form on the glass causing someone’s grip to slip and break the glass.

While the logic was sound, it was a damned silly thing to worry about.

The interviewer placed a finger against her ear and nodded once or twice, then gave a thumbs up. She had yet to smile.

“Where are my damned notes? JACK! Get my notes over here you lazy jerk!” she yelled, and looked pissed.

“Coming Janet!” a short thin man ran up with a clipboard held out. Just as he was about to hand her the clipboard he tripped and landed with a crunch. The interviewer let out an explosive sigh. The one called Jack stood up holding his nose, with blood obviously flowing from it, and handed her the clipboard.

“You stupid idiot! Do you know how long I worked on those notes? What would have happened if you had gotten blood all over them? Get out Of Here!” she tore the notes away from him.

Jack's eyes, while already started to swell, also started to water as he ran off stage trying to keep the blood from hitting the carpeting.

Carl frowned at her. That was no way to treat a guy for a simple accident. She held her finger to her ear again.

“Yes, Dave. Yeah, Fire his ass. That klutz almost ruined my notes.” She paused a moment. “I don’t give one good god damned shit who the fuck he’s related to. If that stupid fuck comes near me again I’ll break every other bone in that thick fat head of his.” She paused again. “I don’t care, he’s fired, and that’s final. What?” she paused again. “What do you mean they won’t send another?” she paused for about 10 seconds. “I am NOT abusive.” Another pause. “I Demand competent help and if they can’t provide it get me another staffing agency, Pronto!”

Another voice yelled out “10 seconds people!”

The interviewer dropped her hand and assumed a completely fake smile that Carl was certain she never wore off camera. He tried to smile as well, it didn’t come off so well.

The cameras had red lights on them now, and someone just off camera counted down on his fingers from 5. On one he pointed at Janet and she started talking as pleasant as if none of what she just said had ever happened.

“This is Janet Montfleurie sitting here with none other than Carl Meriwether Barnes, the latest Genson Lottery winner. Twenty-five people have won the lottery before him, and many more will afterwards, but he is our man of the hour.” She turned away from the camera to look at him with completely fake look of interest. “Greetings Carl, pleasure to have you here tonight.” It was still mid-morning.

“Thank you Janet, it is a pleasure to be here.” He held his hands in his lap and sat back slightly to better appear relaxed. He wasn’t, but TV was all about style over substance.

“Carl, what does it feel like to be one of only 25 people in the city to win one of the fabled ‘Golden Tickets’?” Carl chuckled.

"I would so much call it a fable, Janet. The winning tickets are real, after all." He looked to a camera slightly off to her side and smiled directly into it. "I guess I feel like this is all a dream. A dream I really hope I do not wake up from if it is a dream."

"What was your initial reaction to discovering you had won?"

"Well, I really couldn't believe it at first. I had to check the numbers twice against the screen. Then I wasn't sure if I should run around or shout first... So I did both." He smiled and gave a short chuckle with that. Janet's fake smile broadened slightly.

"Jumping for joy no doubt." Carl shook his head.

"No, no jumping, that would have annoyed the people who live below me."

"Modest and considerate, I see." Her eyes became cold. Nice people she obviously didn't like much. Carl attempted to blush slightly and lowered his gaze, he looked back up quickly.

His grandfather had once told him to 'always look a bully in the eye', and he could tell that this Janet was exactly that.

"So Carl, tell us a little about yourself. What do you do for a living?"

"Well, Janet, I work as a tech support agent over at The Help Desk. I have been there for about 8 years now."

"Does it pay well?"

"Better than some of the other options I had available to me when I graduated from MIT. I happen to be rather good at what I do, and I couldn't really see myself in any other position."

"Any girlfriends?" she asked this one with a predator grin on her face, but Carl had figured an angel out for this one.

"Well, I have met this one young lady..." she interrupted him

"How does she feel about your winning the lottery?" He could lie, or he could be honest. The truth was he had no idea how Delva felt... at least about the alteration that is.

He decided to go for as little information as he could get away with.

"She is quite happy." Janet's eyes narrowed. She could smell the half lie there, and were she just another smut-reporter on the street Carl could see a hundred questions forming in her eyes that she would have hurdled at him, making up the answers for herself just to punish him for that.

"I'm sure she is." Carl took a drink of water, and Janet waited, and checked her notes.

"It says here that you rode in last years 'Pappy's Run', are you an anti-helmet advocate, Carl?" The glee in her eyes was apparent. A Lawbreaker would give her an angle to corner him.

Of course he wasn't, but he could see that's where she wanted to go with this. He considered his answer for all of one second.

"No. The Helmet Law is for the protection of the populous. I understand the reasoning behind the anti-helmet advocates, not wishing their freedoms and free wills to be legislated. But I prefer to wear the helmet. Even if the law ever does get repealed, I will continue to wear it."

"If you are not an advocate, then why ride with them?" Carl cut her off, she was trying to drive him to cross a line.

"I enjoy riding, Ms. Montfleurie. As does every single other rider that rides in Pappy's Run. We would not be out there if not for the love of riding. Many of them wish to repeal the law that they feel is unjust and infringes on their rights of self-determination. I may not agree with their aims, but I understand the reasoning behind it, and personally hope them the best."

Her eyes got colder.

"Are you a member of any of the so called 'gangs', Carl?" He chuckled.

"I'm a geek, I ride a scooter." He shook his head. "While I might not mind riding with them, I'm probably not the poster boy for the Bikers in this city." He straitened his glasses.

"A Geek? Surely you're not saying that the bikers of this city..." He cut her off again

"I am not saying anything, Ms. Montfleurie. I am merely pointing out that I am not exactly what most of the legitiment gangs are looking for."

She thought about that for a moment. She didn't like being cut off, but if she continued that line of questioning she'd be accused of trying to beat him up over nothing. Well, she was, but loosing this gig interviewing people for The Company paid to well to blow it over some stupid geek. She checked her notes again.

"I see you like Internet comics."

"Yes I do. I did say I was a geek, didn't I?" he chuckled. She smiled like a shark, there was nothing warm about it.

"I understand you read several ever day. Which one is your favorite?"

Carl pretended to consider it for a moment. He knew the answer, but it made for a bit more convincing answer if he at least looked like he wasn't completely sure.

"Well... I mean they are all great in their own way. The stories, the art, the jokes and 'in-gags'. But, if I had to choose only one? Hmmmm." Carl rubbed his chin. "I'd have to say PVP Online is my favorite." It was a lie, of course. Robert the Fox was his favorite, but he didn't want to hand this unscrupulous shark more ammo.

"Oh? Why is that?" Carl shrugged.

“It is a comic about geeks who run an online magazine about gaming. They get paid to do what every geek in America would love to do for a living. Playing video games and telling other people what they think about them.” He gambled on the fact she had not actually bothered to read any of the comics.

His gamble paid off.

“Any other hobbies you would care to share with us, Carl?” He thought about it again. There was not one thing about his life he wanted to tell this bitch... but...

“Well... About once a month or so, when it’s warm out that is, I go down to Johnson Lake and spent a day fishing with ‘Old Man Johnson’.”

“Fishing? You do know that fishing is prohibited in the park, don’t you, Carl?”

“No, Ma’am... only fishing hooks are prohibited.” He smiled. Score one point for his side.

“Point taken, Carl.” She adjusted her notes, and a figure just off stage behind the camera she was almost looking at waved a hand.

“Well, that seems to be all the time we have tonight. Carl, it was a pleasure having you here tonight!” even in the middle of morning.

“I was my pleasure to meet you, Janet. I’ve heard so much about you.” She narrowed her eyes, pretty sure she’d just been insulted. But smiled anyway.

“Of course.” She turned to the middle camera. “This is Janet Montfleurie bidding you a good evening.”

“CUT!” a rather stuffy looking man wandered out from between the cameras as the crew started to swarm the set. “Wonderful, Janet, Just Wonderful!” And if he meant a word of it Carl would offer to eat his tie.

To her credit, instead of throwing a fit on stage where the cameras might just catch it, she stormed off stage, pushing a few people out of her way while she was at it... even if they were not strictly speaking in her way.

Carl stood and watched her exit.

“You didn’t win any friends here tonight, Carl.” The voice in his ear made him jump. It was Arianna.

“Oh! Um, yeah. Not that I really mind much. She’s a bitch isn’t she?” Arianna chuckled, and a janitor was called to mop up the drool from the crew, who were not all doing what they were supposed to be doing.

“That maybe, but she has made it her job to ruin anyone that makes her look bad, and you came darn close to that today.” Arianna put her hands on her hips, which had the effect of thrusting her bosom out at whoever happened to be standing in front of her at the time... in this case Carl. “She used to be a tabloid reporter, and still is a raving opportunist.” Carl looked skeptically at Arianna.

“Oh, and I suppose your not?” She chuckled.

“Only when I want something.” She gave him a seductive look and ran a finger across his chest.

“Speaking of wanting something...” Carl ventured

“Yes?” She stepped closer, lust in her eyes and a smile on her lips which were parted ever so slightly.

“I was wondering if Delva... I mean, Ms. McClanniahhan was around here someplace... Observing.” Only a slight flicker of annoyance played across her face, but the smile was genuine, and her eyes softened. She stepped back a half pace.

“Yes, she is in the control room. She asked me if you would care to join her for lunch. Nancy’s apartment is still vacant after all.” Carl broke into a foolish grin. “She also asked if I would join you.” She hadn’t, but that was immaterial, and Carl didn’t know this.

“Of course, you’re always welcome to join us.” Arianna grinned broadly. “For food, that is... and conversation.” Her naughty look told Carl that she was ‘inventing’ all sorts of reasons to join them.

Arianna gave him a ‘come hither’ finger wag, and strutted off toward the elevators. He followed, not sure if he was going to regret it or not. He loosened his tie nervously, half convinced that he would regret it.

* * *

Delva was wearing the yellow sundress she had worn to Madam Gutierrez’s parlor, properly altered so it actually fit her now, and a matching pair of shoes that had been discarded onto the floor under the coffee table. She reclined on the far end of the couch, and Carl sat next to her. He had lost his jacket, tie, and shoes as well. Arianna again had the love seat to herself in a blue dress, shoes under the coffee table as well.

They were munching on finger sandwiches and Twinning’s Earl Grey tea while a Bose radio in the corner played sappy love songs that Carl had never really cared for until recently.

Between sandwiches Arianna posed the question that she new they had not talked about.

“So, what exactly do you think of the upcoming Alteration, Delva?” Delva almost jumped. She had answered the question once before, but to Arianna, she had not talked to Carl about it. She looked between them. Carl, looked to Delva.

Arianna nibbled on her sandwich glancing from one to the other. Delva swallowed. She was cornered, and she knew it.

“It is his choice, Ms. Brockhouse.”

“Pah! Cut the crap Delva, we’re alone here.” Delva blushed.

“If Carl decides to go thought with the alteration, Arianna, then I will stand behind him... and if not I will support him in that as well.”

Carl hadn't even considered what she might think; he was pretty focused on it happening. He had not given thought to what he'd do if she didn't wish it to happen. He blinked.

"You sure?"

"This alteration is why we met; if not for that we never would have known each other. Providence, fate, however you wish to look at it. I would not presume to deny you the opportunity that has been presented to you."

Carl, looked back and forth between the two ladies present. From the naughty look on Arianna's face she had apparently thought the same thing Carl just had.

"I'm seeing someone already, Carl, you naughty little man." And she chuckled wickedly. "I would be cheating if I slept with another man when my heart already belongs to someone." Delva arched an eyebrow, but said nothing. Carl didn't notice this.

"I was not suggesting anything, Arianna. I am also seeing someone." He smiled and looked to Delva who all but glowed. They held hands and gazed into each others eyes.

"And how do you feel about it, Carl? The alteration that is." Arianna asked. Carl thought about it.

He had won a lottery against incredible odds, and discovered love in the most unlikely location. If he walked away from it right now he'd still be a winner, and have a long life of happiness with his love.

Of course, ever person in the city would think him an idiot for turning down for free what could only be purchased by millionaires. He'd be shunned, made fun of, insulted... which he was regularly anyway. His mind play over a very possible scenario of losing his job because he didn't have the conviction to go through with something that every other person in the city would all but kill to have.

He also thought of how much he really wanted to correct all those little things about himself that he'd been ashamed of for 30 years. To be perfect... if also a bit hairier. He ran a hand across the slightly thin spot on the top of his head that he tried not to think about most of the time. Vanity was not a driving force in his life, or so he thought.

"I... I have no reason to change my mind at this time." Was it cowardice to back out? Or continue? He could not tell, but he'd been given this opportunity for a reason, and he'd see it through at least.

Carl sighed, and looked to Delva, she was smiling. They were still holding hands and gazing into each others eyes.

Arianna looked at them sitting there, and felt a slight surge of jealousy... not just for what they had, but for they fact that they were together. Her and her Charlie were separated by several thousand miles and would not see each other for a few more months at the very least.

"Now. About those video's..." She looked up from her tea with an evil look in her eyes, and

shocked looks on both faces that had turned to look at her. Both sets of glasses sliding to the end of their respective noses.

Both were resettled simultaneously, eyes wide behind them. Arianna chuckled wickedly.

“Vi... Video’s?” Delva asked. Carl swallowed.

“As you both well know there is no place on company property that is unmonitored. This apartment is no exception.” She swirled her tea with a finger and licked it clean suggestively.

“But, but... You said the monitors were turned off!” Delva almost screamed, Arianna chuckled.

“Monitors, yes. Cameras and recording equipment, no.” Carl started to protest but Arianna held up a hand. “I am the only one with authorization to view what occurs in this apartment. I must also say that your last performance was quite inspiring.” Delva blushed and Carl swallowed. Being recorded had not even occurred to him the other night.

Arianna lent forward revealing quite a lot of cleavage while doing so. Delva felt a slight flush of warmth as she looked upon that cleavage... so did Carl for that matter, and for almost the exact same reason.

“The recordings are very well protected, and security is tested on a daily basis to ensure no one can obtain any company sensitive information. So you have nothing to fear about them being made public.”

“And I suppose there is something you wish to ensure it stays that way, I take it?” Carl asked bitterly. Arianna shook her head.

“No. I would not do that to you. IF, however you wished to perform for my personal entertainment in person, that would always be welcome. But no, I will not blackmail you with the videos. I have more than a few myself that I would rather not have made public... I would not put to people I care for in that position.” She set her tea down.

“Is this the way you normally treat people you care for?” Carl asked rather tartly. Arianna sighed and looked to Delva. Her face held a slightly betrayed look.

“If you want the videos deleted, I will do that. But I cannot turn off the cameras for any reason. I can only remove the recordings after they have been reviewed by someone authorized to delete them... Me for instance. It is for security reasons, should anything happen I could be held liable. I would have hoped you would understand.”

“Liability aside... you said you could delete the videos.” Delva spoke finally. Arianna nodded. “Then I wish them deleted. All of them.” The stress on ‘all’ not being lost on Arianna.

“As you wish. Consider it done.” Arianna sighed. At least she’d have her personal backups. A minute of silence passed.

“Well... all that unpleasantness aside now.” Arianna stood. “I have a meeting I must go to. Please feel free to use this apartment as you will, and trust that your privacy is safe with me. I will see

that you are undisturbed.” She recovered her shoes, carrying them as she started to walk toward the elevators but stopped turning back a few feet away from the doors.

“Oh, Ms. McClanniahhan,” Delva and Carl both looked over to her. “I would like to have a word with you later this afternoon, say about 3ish, in my office. I trust you can find it.”

“Of course, Ma’am.” Arianna smiled and walked out of the room, closing the door behind her.

“Of all the lowdown dirty...” Carl started but Delva interrupted him.

“Carl, she was trying to cover her ass as well as let us know we are her friends... even if I don’t like the way she did it.” He stood up and started pacing, then stopped and pointed to the door.

“Did you hear the way she said ‘Private performance’? As if we were porn stars for her own personal entertainment!” Delva stood up and hugged him. It’s very hard to stay angry when some one you very much care about does that.

“I know. But she was joking. You know she is a horrid flirt. She also knew we’d never take her up on the offer or she would have never said it... I think.” She thought about it, and the more she thought about it the more she was convinced that Arianna would have taken them upon the offer had they accepted to ‘perform’ for her in person.

If she could be convinced that Arianna would only watch, she kind of liked the idea. A semi-public performance. It aroused her, to perform with her lover in front of her lover. Two lovers she didn’t have to share with each other.

Carl wrapped his arms around her and kissed her forehead. He thought for a moment, then a wicked grin spread across his face. He chuckled and Delva looked up.

She got the idea from the look in his eyes.

“Wanna?”

“I thought you’d never ask.” They kissed, hands roaming.

“We’ll give her a show she’ll be sorry she missed.”

* * *

It wasn’t missed. Arianna Brockhouse didn’t have an overly large office with soundproof walls and windowless doors for no reason.

* * *

Carl lay in bed trying to recover as Delva walked into the outer office of one Ms. Brockhouse. The secretary rang on the intercom.

“Ms. Brockhouse, your three o’clock has arrived.”

“Thank you, send her in, Pammy.” Pam proffered a hand toward the door. Delva nodded opening, entering, and closing the door behind her.

Arianna was behind a rather large desk, several flat panel LCD’s clearly showing the performance that had just recently concluded on replay. Arianna looked to Delva with a wickedly delighted smile on her face.

Delva couldn’t help but return the smile; she was after all positively glowing anyway. Arianna gave her a ‘come hither’ finger wag which Delva obeyed. She walked right up next to Arianna who leaned forward to place her face between Delva’s breasts.

Delva took a set back. Arianna looked up to Delva’s eyes just in time for the slap to connect to her cheek.

“I guess I deserve that.” She sighed and leaned back into her chair.

“You could have warned be before you brought that up... and that offer. Really Arianna...” Delva had put her hands on her hips.

Arianna rubbed a hand across her slightly reddening cheek.

“I was just teasing, Delva.”

“What was that term you used at Maria’s? ‘My left nipple’ I think it was...” Arianna chuckled sheepishly.

“Ok, it wasn’t all teasing. Just think of how much fun it would have been in any case.”

“Carl was about ready to throttle you, you know. He was quite upset. He’s still almost convinced that you are trying to blackmail him into something he’s not ready for.”

“Blackmail is such an ugly word... besides, it was more along the lines of a request.”

The monitors on her desk continued to play the recording. It showed Delva and Carl in a very erotic position usually referred to as the ‘Reverse Cowboy’ right there on the couch they had been sitting on during lunch.

The movement on the screen caught both women’s eyes. They watched in silence for a few minutes, Arianna’s hands sliding below the level of the desk.

Delva got a naughty idea while watching Arianna play with herself as she watched Delva and Carl going at it. She hadn’t had enough time to wash up before coming down here, nor even enough time to find her panties for that matter. She’d felt a little naked walking down here, but now it would come in handy.

She stepped forward placing one high heeled foot on the chair next to Arianna’s hip, causing Delva’s dress to slide up and give her a view of what was underneath. A wicked grin was her reward as Arianna slid forward to get her face under Delva’s dress.

Delva took her glasses off and dropped them on the desk, eyes close and enjoying the moment.

Arianna did her very best to make up for the scene she had caused at lunch, and she very much enjoyed the apology as much as Delva did.

* * *

Pammy switched off the monitor, and crossed Arianna's 3:30 appointment off the schedule.

She secretly wished her boss would do that to her one day, if for no other reason then to show her how it should be done and not the inept fashion of her last female encounter.

She called Mr. Hammond and apologized for the cancellation of his appointment, giving an unforeseen extended emergency meeting that could not be avoided as the reason.

Mr. Hammond was pompous enough to take that as an insult, but wasn't powerful enough to do anything about it.

* * *

Carl's dream replayed what had actually transpired, but there was another party evolved this time. He didn't have to figure out whom the third party was, the impressive cleavage and wicked chuckle had clued him in.

The dream went places he had only ever seen in triple X movies, and was not interrupted. Had he not already expended himself, he would have had a sticky problem upon waking.

Of course, waking brought a different problem.

He couldn't move. Both of his arms were pinned

He blinked the sleep out of his eyes and looked to either side and was stunned.

He wasn't surprised to find Delva had returned, and was naked above the sheets... no, what shocked him was Arianna naked and on top of the sheets as well. Both women were snuggled up to him, and both were asleep.

"Huh."

* * *

Dinner was eaten in silence as both women sat on the couch across from Carl who was sitting on the love seat for a change.

They had all been awakened by the dinner chime and both Arianna and Delva had been too embarrassed to talk about it just then.

Carl was working on his second shake for the day that was supposed to be some kind of chocolate. The women were in slinky outfits that barely covered them, and neither were wearing

anything under them.

“Do you care to explain now?” Carl asked around the straw of his shake.

They shared a look, then looked to Carl. Delva spoke first.

“It just sort of... Happened...”

“It’s not like we planned it...”

“One thing led to another...”

“We were not trying to hurt you...”

“I don’t feel any different about you...”

“We just got carried away is all...”

“Carl, I’m sorry.”

They were holding each other’s hands while they were talking.

Carl stood up and paced back and forth on his side of the coffee table, mixed emotions running rampant clashing with each other.

On one hand he felt betrayed by Delva’s indiscretion with Arianna. On the other it’s not like they were married. And on a third hand it was kind hot that they ended up in bed with him... not that he’d had any of that action.

He continued to pace trying not to look at either of them. They had made no promises to each other, they had exchanged no vows, and they had not even used the ‘L-word’ yet. It was 2015, and it was a very progressive city. Understanding and acceptance went hand in hand for almost every lifestyle there was, provided it was not blatantly flaunted in public.

Who was he to judge them? No, that wasn’t his place... but he couldn’t change how he felt about it. It was as if he wasn’t good enough or something. He felt he was inferior, that Arianna could provide something he could not.

He stopped looking toward the window.

“I... I need some time with this...” and he walked into the master bedroom, closing the door behind him.

Delva started to cry and hugged Arianna. Arianna hugged her back and made ‘shushing noises’. Of course that is what had lead them to this point in the first place, but neither pointed it out.

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Carl was pacing absorbed in his inner turmoil, and did not notice Reginald enter the room, but

not from the living room. He had a private entrance he used when needed.

“Nancy Pruett.” Carl jumped at the sound of Reggie’s baritone voice.

“Huh?” he asked the big man that was just all of a sudden there.

“Nancy Pruett. That is the name Ms. Brockhouse uses when traveling. It helps keep her anonymous when she goes to see Mr. Charlie.” Carl point toward the living room.

“You mean?” Reggie nodded.

“I mean she did not lie to you, Mr. Carl.” Reggie took a seat on the edge of the bed. “Ms. Arianna is very lonely, you see. She spends most of her time running the Public Relations department. It is a very big job and she is constantly dealing with problems.” Reggie wiped a hand on his knee. “Just last week there was a preacher from the Carolinas that called for a national boycott of Genson’s products. Claimed The Company was tampering with gods design, and that we should be punished. That we were in league with the devil.” He looked up at Carl who had stopped pacing.

“You see, it is a very difficult job she has. Then there is Mr. Charlie.” He sighed. “She has not seen him in several months, and will not for several more months. She loves him very much, but neither are willing to give up their careers just for love.” He stood. “They could not live without their work, and they both understand that.” He stepped forward and placed a hand on Carl’s shoulder.

“Don’t judge her too harshly. She still hasn’t gotten over being that little tomboy that everyone made fun of, and I doubt she ever will.”

Carl looked at the floor.

“I know... I’ve been that way all my life as well. Never good enough and always alone.” Carl looked up into Reggie’s eyes. Reggie smiled.

“I knew you would understand, Mr. Carl. You’s a good man.” And clapped him on the arm before turning away. Carl looked toward the living room, and by the time he looked back Reggie was gone, as if he was never really there.

Carl plopped down on the bed to think this over, absently straitening up his glasses.

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Phil woke him in the morning, back in his own room, at the usual time. No words were spoken. Phil had been informed that Carl needed some private time alone to work out a personal problem. While Phil thought he knew what it was that Carl was worried about, he was only half right. It involved Ms. McClanniahnan alright, but not as to weather or not he should continue with the alteration. He left after giving Carl a warm smile, and closed the door.

Carl didn’t bother getting dressed. His shorts were good enough for eating in. then he drank his shake as he checked his email and webcomics he’d fallen behind on.

Once that was done, he sat staring out the window.

He sat there for an hour without moving.

Finally he got up and took a shower. Brushed his teeth, and shaved. He looked into the mirror, and the eyes that seemed to plead back at him to hurry up and get over it. Anything to be next to Delva again. Forgive her, and forgive Arianna.

He decided, then left the bathroom to get dressed. Once that was done he picked up the phone to call the attendant with the sexy voice.

“Yes, Mr. Barnes?” she asked.

“I never did get your name, Ma’am.” She chuckled.

“It’s Pamela.” Carl smiled.

“Pamela, would please ask Ms. Brockhouse if she could spare a few minutes of her time to speak with me?”

“Of course, Mr. Barnes. Is it concerning the Alteration tomorrow?”

“No... I... I just need someone to talk to right now... and, well. She said I could call on her anytime.”

“Of course, Mr. Barnes. I will tell her as soon as she is off the phone to Japan.” And then she was gone.

Of course Carl understood. She was expecting his call, and the comment about Japan was to remind him that she was missing her loved one.

He replaced the phone in its cradle, and waited. He didn’t bother checking the time, he knew it’d be a while.

After a long time there was a tentative knock at his door. He got up and answered it.

“Ms. Brockhouse, I was expecting you. Please, do come in.” He proffered a hand inside.

“Thank you, Mr. Barnes.” She said with a slight smile and entered the room. Carl closed the door, then offered the use of the chair to his guest. She sat. She was wearing an almost conservative dress, considering her normal taste in clothing.

Carl sat on the bed directly in front of her and clasped his hands, rubbing them together slowly. While he’d decided, he didn’t quite know how to put it into words yet... so he tried just talking and let them work themselves out.

“I know it was nothing personal against me. I know that I have no claim, that I’m being selfish. My prides been hurt, Ms. Brockhouse. For a man like me we really don’t have a lot to begin with, and it’s a grievous injury.” He sighed. “I’m... I’m sorry.” Arianna was shocked, and puzzled

“For what?”

“For being a selfish git, and a stupid jerk, Ms. Brockhouse.” He looked up to a smile on her face and a tear in her eye. She tentatively extended a hand and placed it on his shoulder gently.

“Thank you, Carl.” They shared a smile for a moment. “I’ll forgive you if you’ll forgive me.”

“You have nothing to be forgiven for, Ms. Brockhouse.” She lightly slapped his shoulder.

“My name is Arianna, and if I am not mistaken you know how to say it even.” She lost a bit of her smile. “I did not mean to hurt you like that. I didn’t mean for what happened to happen between Delva and I. I assuredly didn’t think of how it would affect you.” She placed her hands in her lap before continuing.

“For my thoughtless and selfish actions, I beg your forgiveness, Mr. Barnes.” She bowed formally in Japanese fashion.

Carl placed a hand on her shoulder.

“If forgiveness were a river, it would flow from me onto thee for a year and a day, Arianna.” And some people say watching anime is useless...

She straitened in the chair, tears flowing from her eyes, and took his hand. He stood and helped her to her feet, then pulled her close for a hug.

She was very warm, and very soft.

They stood there in the embrace for a few moments then reluctantly parted. Carl sat down first, and Arianna followed suit. Another silent moment passed.

“I was, uh... Pacing in your bedroom when Reginald came in, yesterday.”

“Yes, he told me.” Carl looked up. She didn’t even try to cover it up, and she knew that he knew.

“Do you know what he told me?” she nodded.

“And you know how I replied then.” Taking a meaning full look around the room. She nodded.

“I think, Carl, that you and I have more in common than we would normally expect. You see... I was a lot like Delva several years ago. Quite shy, not always the prettiest thing in the room, and very little in the way of future prospects career-wise that is. I decided that, if I was going to make it in the world there would be nothing I was unwilling to do to make it. And I did, I used everything I could to make a life for myself. I... I found out where the bodies were buried, and which skeletons were in which closet. I used that information heartlessly. When that didn’t work I used my... Natural talents to get what I wanted.”

“I fought tooth and nail to get higher on the corporate ladder than I would have on merit alone. I had nothing in my life but work.” She sighed, remembering those times.

“Then came the opportunity I could not pass up. A new ‘Process’ was being developed by The Company, and they had just been given permission to begin human testing.” She chuckled. “I called in

every favor I could to find out what it was, and get on the list for it once I understood it.” she twirled a lock of hair in her fingers and gave him a naughty look. “I also used my talents to make sure that I was the one chosen for the test.”

Carl swallowed. Her sheer determination drove her beyond anything Carl could imagine doing himself, and won her the top spot in the roughest job in the company.

Carl nodded.

“I think we understand each other.... Arianna.”

She nodded.

“Well... I guess I should go tell Delva, then.” Arianna held up a hand with a wicked grin spreading on her face.

* * *

Arianna strutted into her living room where Delva was still waiting, a terry cloth robe on her, and a cup of tea in hand. She sat up seeing Arianna enter.

“Well?” Arianna lowered her eyes. Delva’s heart dropped. She set her tea down and covered her mouth.

Without a word Arianna came to her and pulled her into a standing hug, and held her as she tried not to cry.

“I... I guess I should have expected that...” Came the muffled words from Arianna’s shoulder as Arianna made shushing noises.

“It’s ok, dear, it’s ok.” Delva worked to get her breathing under control. She really didn’t feel like crying, matter of fact she didn’t want to be crying at all. She wanted to banish all feeling right there and then and never feel again.

With a wicked grin on her face, Arianna pulled her slowly toward the bedroom. Delva sniffed and laughed.

“My, don’t you have a one track mind...” Arianna chuckled and pulled Delva close for a kiss.

Ok, maybe she wouldn’t banish all feeling away...

Arianna turned her around while they were kissing, and walked with Delva’s back to the bedroom door, which was always closed. They broke the kiss just before the door, and Arianna opened the double doors just behind Delva. She advanced on Delva who took a few steps back still looking into Arianna’s eyes, then spun around to jump into bed... and stopped cold.

Carl was on the bed under the sheets, and he wasn’t wearing a shirt. Delva looked to his smiling face, stunned. She jumped slightly as the sound of the bedroom doors closing behind her, and turned. Arianna had left. She looked back to the bed speechless.

Carl simply held his hand out for her.

“Oh, Carl!” as she dove into bed.

* * *

Reggie sat in the corner looking at the patterns on the wall while noises came from behind him... both from the monitor that was on, and from his charge who had her prized neon ‘Ron Jeremy’ on the bed behind him.

“I take it that everything worked out alright then, Ma’am?”

“Uh huh...” was the breathless reply.

“Worked out their differences I take it then, Ma’am?”

“Uh huh...” came the reply with a little bit of a squeal of delight from the monitor.

“Brilliant plan, Ma’am.” He was smiling. He loved it when a plan came together.

“Reggie?”

“Yes, Ma’am?”

“Shut up and get out.”

“Yes, Ma’am.” Reggie said, leaving.

* * *

Carl sat in a chair that could have been in any of a hundred dentists’ offices around the city. It was rather comfortable and heated so his nearly naked form would not get cold. He had on only a loin cloth to protect his dignity.

He’d already recorded the video of him agreeing to the clauses of the EULA once again, vowing his complete understanding and acceptance of the outcome of his alteration. A nurse handed him his final shake, it was an orange color and was almost an orange-cream slushy... but not quite. It still tasted a bit metallic.

He sat nervously as a half dozen techs hooked and wired about a hundred probes to his skin and scalp. The room was almost perfectly white, and there were lights everywhere.

For every light there were at least 4 cameras.

An I.V. was hooked up to him as well, providing nourishment during the alteration, as he’d probably be too sick to his stomach to eat anything for a few days while the nano-bots rebuilt him in the image of Robert the Fox.

There was a radio built into the headrest playing soothing music, that really didn't sooth anyone, let alone Carl. He looked to the large mirror on the side of the room. He knew that Delva and Arianna would be on the other side of that mirror. He smiled and tried to wave, but a tech held his arm down and strapped him into place... a safety feature they'd had to implement sometime after the advent of human testing of 'The Process'.

Two tech's approached him from opposite sides with large injector needles filled to the brim with the 'Forman' nanites. A nurse each swabbed his arms at the site of the injections.

"Now, this might sting a bit." One of the technicians said... and he was wrong, it stung a lot.

Bob, who seemed to never change, burst into the observation room with a mess of papers in his hand drawing the attention of the two people there.

"Anna! There's been a mistake!" he looked in to the operating room and was crest fallen to see that Carl had already been injected, the needles just then being removed.

"What?" Two voices exclaimed as one, as both women jumped to their feet. He thrust the papers toward Arianna.

There in the middle of the page there was a highlight of the error.

"Why the HELL wasn't this caught before?" she almost threw the papers at the floor, but managed to hold onto them. Delva ripped the papers from Arianna's hand.

"I... I don't know. I went over everything three times, just as protocol demands. I never saw the error."

"Oh... My... God..." Delva put her hand to her mouth. Arianna was already on her way out of the room. She ran to the door of the operating room and opened the door, beckoning to one of the techs. When he approached she could see Carl's skin tone already beginning to change to a rich red color.

She pulled him by the collar out of the room.

"Please tell me there is a way to stop the process." She demanded.

"N... No, Ma'am... we've never had to abort once it's started before.... I... I don't know even if we could. Why? What's the problem?"

She told him. His jaw dropped.

Arianna looked toward the door.

"Sedate him."

"Ma'am?" Arianna snapped her head back to the tech, fire in her eyes.

"I said sedate him. Tell him that it's standard procedure for changes this dramatic."

"Y... Yes Ma'am!" He tried to turn back to the door, but Arianna still had his shirt in her hand.

“And keep him sedated till it’s completed.” She let go, and the tech scurried into the operating room. He got a few queer looks as he administered the sedative and lied to the subject.

In a few minutes Carl had drifted off to dreamless sleep, unaware of what was happening, or even that Delva and Arianna were holding each other in the observation room, crying.

* * *

Carl was very warm. He was also stiff and sore all over. There was a pain in his crotch that he couldn’t place. Conciseness was quite elusive, and avoided him... he had to fight for it. He felt as if he’d been sleeping for a week, he was so tired.

It was the voices in the room that he finally used to bring himself awake.

“So far I can detect no abnormalities, Ma’am. Everything seems to be perfectly normal.”

“How soon will you know if there are complications?”

“A day or two, I think, after she becomes awake.”

Carl was confused. Were they talking about some one else in his room? Another alteration? He tried to open his eyes. They were like lead and didn’t want to open.

When he finally got an eye open he was almost blinded, he was staring strait up into a light. He tried to put a hand over his face.

“She’s awake.” The other voice said.

Carl tried to move again, but his arms were heavy and he could barely move.

“Light...” he finally said, his tongue like sandpaper.

“The light, Turn it off. Get me some water.” Water sounded good to Carl. Then he was moving... no, the bed was moving, bringing him into a sitting position.

Slowly Carl’s mind recognized the voice, it was Arianna Brockhouse. For some reason he did not have the usual physical reaction to her. After a moment or two he figured he should be uncomfortably hard, but wasn’t.

He figured it was the drugs... He figured wrong.

“Carl?”

“Hmmm?”

“You feel ok?”

“Warm.” He mumbled.

“I’d hope so... your fur is quite thick and lush.”

That reminded him, and he smiled. Arianna put a straw to his lips. Carl drank luke warm water, but it might as well have been a Cabernet 1961 for all it tasted better than anything he had ever drank.

Arianna only let him have a sip before she moved it away and set it on the table beside his bed.

“Carl? Can you open your eyes?” he tried again, it was easier and darker than before. His eyes didn’t hurt so much now. The room was blurry.

“Glasses.” This surprised Arianna, but then again it didn’t. Stigmatism was not always corrected by The Process, and no one knew why.

She found Carl’s glasses in a drawer next to his bed, and placed them on his snout. They had been fixed to new arms so they would stay on his face, now that he had ears in a different place than before.

“You are the first person to choose to be an Anthropomorphic person, Carl.”

“Yeah me. Setting records and I’m not even out of bed yet.” He chuckled.

The chuckle sounded wrong, wrong pitch, wrong timber, and wrong octave. He was confused. He raised a hand to look at it now that he could almost see properly again.

His hand was richly furred and a soft chocolate brown color. His eyes followed it up to the elbow where the telltale red started to creep in.

He also started to notice it was much more effeminate than before. He looked at the nails on his fingers. They were thick and lustrous black, slightly pointed, and reminded him almost of claws... just not as sharp.

He scratched at his chest... and felt something very out of place. He looked down. There, under his gown that all patients in hospitals wear, were two mounds on his chest.

“Carl, there was a mistake made...” Arianna was saying as he moved his other hand to his chest and started to probe with his hands...

If he was very mistaken, they felt a lot like breasts. His breasts. His face had a look of shock as he slowly turned to Arianna. She was in a cream colored business suit, but unlike every other time he’d seen her, she was wearing a shirt that covered her ample bosom.

“Mistake?” Arianna swallowed and looked to the floor before looking him back into the eye again.

“I felt I should be the one to tell you. During the compile of the options you chose before Ms. Gladice took you for the physical... somehow... The gender got screwed up in the computer.” She said it fast as if she were trying to pull off a band aid.

“Screwed up? How?”

“We are not sure. There is an investigation to determine exactly what happened.”

Carl looked around, tears forming in his eyes.

“Where is Delva?”

“She's sleeping right now, Carl. She hasn't left your side until about an hour ago. I made her go to my apartment and get some sleep. She's been crying and holding your hand for days.”

The tear escaped, and because it was annoying him he licked it off his cheek with a very long tongue. Arianna blinked.

“Um... can you do that again?”

“Why?”

“I just... well... can you touch your eyebrow with your tongue for me please?”

He tried, and did. It shocked him almost as much as it did Arianna.

“Mirror?” his voice had raised at least several registers, and was beyond a doubt feminine now.

Arianna dug in the nightstand where his glasses had been and found a mirror, handing it to him. His hand trembled as he took it.

The face that greeted him in that mirror was not his own... but it was now. He was almost the spitting image Bob had created from Regina Fox and his own image.

Just below the level of his eyes there was a cream layer that followed his snout all the way to his black nose, and down his neck. The top of his nose was the same red that was on his arms. He tried barring his teeth, and there were a lot of sharp and pointy ones in his mouth, with incisors and canines unusually large. He opened his mouth to look, and there were still molars in the back.

‘Well...’ he thought ‘At least I am still an omnivore...’

Arianna shuddered, not sure if Carl was angry or just curious... but seeing all those teeth frightened her slightly. Not that she worried that Carl would do anything to hurt her, or anything.

Carl seemed to have recovered a bit of his calm.

“Are... Are you ok with this?” Arianna asked tentatively.

He nodded and held out his hand, she handed him the water again. He watched himself drink it, fascinated as he worked the muscles needed to drink from a straw in his new face.

“I guess it'll look like this when I'm male again, too...” he laughed and dropped the cup. Arianna grabbed it before the lid could come off and drenched him.

“What's so funny? Are you ok?”

Carl lowered the mirror and reached over to hug Arianna, still chuckling.

“Carl?” She feared for his sanity. Laughing was not what she had expected.

“I’d like to get up if it’s ok. I want to look at myself in a bigger mirror.” Arianna pulled away.

“Um... I’ll... I’ll just go ask if it’s ok for you to be up and around... Um... One moment.” She all but fled from the room.

Carl picked up the mirror again and started looking at himself again. His hair was noticeably longer and raven black, lustrous even. His ears, now located higher on his head and much larger were the same chocolate color his arms were on the backs, and the same cream color inside where they faded to pick deeper in. His eyes were still mostly blue, with green highlights at the edge that seemed to sparkle when he smiled. He also found he could, with a little concentration, hear the conversation outside the door.

He lowered the mirror and listened.

“He wants to get out of bed and look at himself in a full length mirror.” Arianna was speaking, almost trembling as she said it.

“Well, I see no reason she should stay in bed, Ma’am. She’ll need to take it easy till...” Arianna interrupted him.

“He. He wants to get up, doctor.”

“SHE, Ms. Brockhouse. Unless the reversal process works on the tissue we are currently testing... The third such test I might add, then she is going to have to get used to being a woman. I should not have to tell you that the other two tests failed to result in any change what so ever.”

Carl was shocked. It hadn’t occurred to him he might not be able to have it either reversed or simply changed back to male. Tears welled up, and started to fall as he tried to get his ears working again.

“When will we know for sure doctor?”

“Another day or so I think. We are trying three times the usual nanites, but I am not hopeful, Ms. Brockhouse. The last test seemed to indicate that the process has bonded with her DNA, rendering it irreversible.” He sighed. “I am afraid this test will render the same results.”

“But...”

“For now, Ms. Brockhouse, you have a friend in there that needs you. As long as she takes it easy, and does not over exert herself, she should be fully recovered in a few days. Once she has shown progress in her recovery I could give you a better idea of her release date.”

“I’ll make sure he doesn’t over do it, doctor.”

“Take care of her, Arianna.” The doctor insisted.

“I will.” There was a scuffling of feet.

“You know, I have never seen you take this much interest in the subjects before. Normally you check in once or twice and are off again before they have recovered their wits from your visit.”

“He’s... He’s a friend, doctor. And a good man.”

“Woman, Ms. Brockhouse. I have no doubt that she is a good person, else you wouldn’t have neglected your duties these last 12 days.”

Carl gasped, and put a hand to his muzzle.

He couldn’t have just said that... not... twelve days... that’s almost two weeks! He was so shocked he didn’t notice Arianna reenter the room and lower the arm on the side of the bed keeping him from rolling out of it.

“Shall we?” she asked tentatively, seeing the wide-eyed look on Carl’s face. “Hun?”

“Did... Did... Did he say... Twe... Twelve... D... Days?” Carl stammered out, nearly choking as he tried to keep from crying.

Arianna lowered her eyes, and sat down on the bed, turning to face him.

“Yes he did, Carl.” She wasn’t too surprised that Carl could hear the conversation, she now had rather large ears, after all.

And she noted the change of term in her mind, regretting it.

“An... And... He said I mi... Might not be... Be...” She hugged Arianna sobbing. Arianna held her in her arms, gently caressing her back and making ‘shushing noises’.

“Might not be able to change back.” Arianna completed for her.

“Wh... What about... Just... Just changing... me... T... To... Back to Male?”

“We don’t know yet, Carl... We don’t know.”

* * *

For the first time in her life, Carl was glad for the split-up-the-back robes she was wearing. They allowed her tail to swish as she walked, the exaggerated motion of her hips swinging it from side to side. She had accidentally knocked over a med cart, 4 drinks, and bumped it against one doctor’s rather fine looking rear end.

Most of the people she passed while holding onto Arianna’s arm for support tried not to pay her any attention, but she drew looks. She had never been a master of interpersonal expression reading, but she didn’t see any looks of revulsion on any face. More... Curiosity.

They passed another room that had the door open. A small voice from inside spoke.

“Look mummy, a big teddy bear! Can I has a teddy that walks around too?”

“Maybe when you’re all better, dear, mommy will get to they biggest teddy bear she can find.” Replied the slightly southern matronly accent.

They walked on past. Carl looked to Arianna who seemed to be wiping away a tear.

“What?” she asked quietly

“Denton is dying. There is nothing we can do but make him comfortable till...” she couldn’t say it.

“What about...” and she made a gesture to her arm like a needle. Arianna shook her head.

“We tried that already. The tumor has taken over too much of his brain. To destroy it with medical nanites... Would render him a vegetable. When we told him... he refused to be spinach the rest of his life...” She chuckled mirthlessly. “Denton hates spinach, but what 8 year old doesn’t?”

“Why couldn’t you fix him?” Arianna sighed.

“His father died in a car accident when he was only 2 years old. They lived in Chicago up until a few months ago. The doctors there... well... they are a charity case. No one wanted to waste the funding on an incurable little boy.”

They walked along in silence for a while, Carl looking back over her shoulder to the little boy’s room, making note of the number.

Her feet were in the paper slippers that hospitals everywhere used, but she could still feel how cold the floor was through them. They finished the circuit around the floor they were on, and got Carl back into her bed.

* * *

Carl waited until it was well and dark outside and that the night nurse had done her hourly check of the rooms before she got out of bed. She had checked in the bathroom earlier to see if any naughty bits were exposed and had discovered her nipples only showed when they were hard, and her more private areas were completely covered unless the skin was pulled back.

Sitting to pee was a bother when she’d been standing all her life, but certain adjustments would have to be made.

For now she had a plan.

She pulled off the paper gown she was wearing, she didn’t like the amount of noise it made when she moved, and if she was going to do this, she had to be quite. She crept to the door and listened.

She heard the nurses at their station a few yards away, and the squeaky wheel on the med-cart on the other side of the floor. No one was close, or by the sounds of it, between her and where she was going.

She cracked the door open slightly, just enough to see through... then remembered why it was all blurry and closed the door to retrieve her glasses.

She tried again. A shape moved past the door as she looked out. She waited and heard the nurse settle into the lopsided chair at the nurses' station. 'Odd-man out' she thought. And opened the door a bit further, no more than an inch wide.

Nothing, and she could still hear nothing that worried her. She slowly opened the door and peeked her head around the corner, looking both ways as she crouched low.

No one in sight. Keeping as low to the ground as she could, some times even walking on all fours, she worked her way back to Denton's room. The door was closed. She looked around, nothing. She opened the door and snuck in.

It was dark in there, but not pitch. There was a small nightlight near a bed behind a set of curtains. She stood up and walked in. She rounded the curtain and half expected Denton's mother to be there. She wasn't. Carl checked the other bed, empty. Then she moved closer to Denton's bed.

He was a small boy, and looked like he was very sick. His pallid skin almost hanging off him, and rather pale. His skin, she could tell, should have been the same glorious shade of chocolate that Carl's hands and ears were.

She stroked a finger across his sweaty brow. He stirred, and looked up. Then blinked and smiled.

"Hello." He said with a small voice. "I saw you walkin' 'round today."

"I know, I saw you too. That's why I came, just to see you."

"Really?" he coughed, and almost couldn't stop for a moment. "Just, just to see me?" he asked when he had his breath back again.

"Really." She smiled and ran a hand across his cheek. He giggled.

"You all fuzzy."

"I know. Do you like?"

"It tickles." They shared a smile and Carl straightened her glasses again.

"What's yer name? Mine's Denton."

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Denton. My name is Carl." He frowned

"Girls shouldn't have boy names." That had not occurred to her. But he didn't have another name picked out yet.

"Oh? What kind of name should a girl have?" he giggled again.

"A girly name silly." Carl arched an eyebrow.

“Like what?” Denton shrugged.

“I dunno... like... Carley maybe? My grandmother was named Carley before she went to find grandpa. He’s been gone since Viet-jam something...” Carl smiled.

“Carley... I like that. Do you think your grandmother would mind if I use it?” Denton shrugged.

“I’s not seen her in years. I hope she finds grandpa soon. I wanna meet him and find out where he’s been all dis time.”

Carley thought about this. As a boy he’d studied history, and twelve years before he was born there had been a war in the southeast pacific in a backwater country called Vietnam. He remembered a few of the horror stories told about that war, and its aftermath.

If Denton’s grandfather had gone there and not returned, she had no doubt where his grandmother was.

“Well, Denton. I’ll bet you something.”

“Oh?”

“I bet you’ll get to see your grandmother soon, and finally get to meet your grandfather too.”

“Really?” his face lit up.

“Yeah. You’ll go to sleep one day and there they will be, waiting for you.”

“Wow. How do you know?”

“Oh, I have a felling about these things. And you know what?”

“What?”

“There won’t be any pain anymore. And everything will be alright.” Denton sighed.

“Mommy says she’ll miss me.” Carley nodded.

“She will, but she’ll be happy knowing that grandmother and grandfather are looking after you.” She smiled.

“Can... Can I axe you summtin?”

“Sure, anything.”

“Can... well... Can I have a hug?” his eyes were pleading, even if she wanted to she couldn’t say no to that face. She smiled. She lowered the arm of the bed and sat down on the edge, then lent forward and embraced him. He wrapped his arms around her and buried his face in her fur, giggling as he did so.

She held him close for a while, then her ear twitched. She thought she heard something from the other

side of the curtain, but she couldn't see anything. She smiled and pulled away from Denton who had an ecstatic look on his face.

"Thanks."

"Your very welcome, Denton." She tucked him back in. "I need to go now, but I'll see if I can stop by later and see you."

"Really? That'd be swell." He said as he started to fall asleep again.

She lent forward and kissed his forehead, then returned the arm of the bed to its previous position. Denton's eyes were already closed. She left, opening the door without looking and backed out, closing it softly. When she turned to go back to her room she almost jumped out of her skin.

Denton's mother was standing there against the wall, wiping the tears from her eyes. Their eyes met, and Denton's mother smiled.

"That was a very sweet thing, dear."

"I... I hope you don't mind." His mother shook her head.

"No harm done, missy, no harm a' tall." They shared a smile. "I didn't catch you's name, dear."

"Denton said my name should be... Carley, like his grandmother." Denton's mother's eyes teared up.

"It's a good name that one, dear. He tell you she was gone?"

Carley nodded, then they hugged.

"My goodness... I thought that was just a suit you's had on,""

"No, no it's all me. I... I won the lottery alteration." Denton's mother had a puzzled look on her face.

"I thought it was a gent that won last time?" Carley arched an eyebrow.

"It was. I... I've been here a while.... Recovering."

Denton's mother gave her the once over.

"I'd say." She placed a hand over her mouth before speaking again. "Dear... Carley... are you aware of the fact you's ain't got no clothes on?"

That hadn't occurred to Carley. She rubbed a hand over her belly.

"I... uh... I hadn't thought... uh... you know... the fur and all." Denton's mother chuckled behind her hand.

"Yeah, well, I hadn't thought of that either, now."

Carley's ear twitched again, and she heard the sound of the med-cart around a corner or two and heading her way.

"I... I need to get back to my room. You know how the nurses can be." She smiled, Denton's mother returned the smile with a sly look.

"You's ain't gotta tell me, none. Go on dear." Carley turned and made her way toward her room. She almost jumped when Denton's mother called out to her one last time.

"Nice tail!" she said it with a wave. Carley sheepishly returned the wave and moved on.

'Nice Tail... like that wouldn't just give me away when I'm trying to not be seen...' She thought as she once again went down on all fours to get past the nurses station, and sneak back in her room.

She got back in her room, and found she was not alone. The nurse had stuck her head into the bathroom looking for Carley had just stepped back out and they came face to face. They both jumped

"Oh my! Miss Barnes, you shouldn't be sneaking off like that!"

"Sorry, I was... Just stretching my legs. The tail is new and I'm still trying to get used to sleeping with it."

"And you're naked! My dear, you just can't go out like that!"

"Well, you know... the fur and all..." well, it worked for Denton's mother.

"Now miss, there's no excuse for that, now." She picked up the discarded dressing gown from the bed. "We'll just get you back into this. No need to be getting into any bad habits on my watch, now." She had that nasally twang of a New Englander, and from her attitude she was a bit of a prude as well, which suited the accent just perfectly.

Carley let herself be dressed again, and helped into bed.

"My goodness, aren't your feet cold at all, now?" Carley thought about it.

"No, not that I noticed."

"Well, they won't be, now." The nurse said as she tucked her feet in.

Carley could already tell this was going to be a warm night, so she snuggled in and tried to make the best of it.

* * *

The covers ended up on the floor less than ten minutes later.

* * *

"Ok, Ms. Barnes, you seem to be well recovered from your Alteration. I am quite pleased by

your progress." The doctor was saying. "Are you feeling uncomfortable? Any unusual cravings or pains?"

"No, sir, not really. I mean I do have the emotional surge, but that is normal for females, I think." Carley answered sheepishly.

The doctor made a notation of the clipboard he was holding.

"Hmmm, yes, that would be consistent with other transgender Alterations we have done in the past. I should settle down in a few days as your body becomes used to the new hormones in your blood stream."

"Have they figured out why I am female now, instead of male like I was before and requested for the Alteration?" She was sitting on the edge of the bed in the same paper gown they insisted that she continue to wear, regardless of how uncomfortable it was.

"No, Ms. Barnes. They are still investigating it. Nearest they have determined is an error at initial programming. There seems to have been several errors compounded." Carley arched an eyebrow.

"Oh?"

The doctor sighed, and lowered his clipboard and looked her in the eyes.

"Truth of the matter is more was done than was permitted by the normally lottery Alterations. We are, in fact, unsure exactly what you are capable of." Her eyes went wide. "If you would consent we would like to run a few more tests to determine exactly what all was changed."

"Will it hurt?" the doctor shook his head.

"Physical evaluations, Ms. Barnes. Dexterity, strength, sight, hearing, hand-eye coordination. Those kind of things. Gymnastics, running speed and distance... pretty standard really."

"You are... not going to make me wear this stupid... I mean, this paper gown for them are you?"

The doctor smiled.

"No, Ms. Barnes. We are not going to make you wear that stupid paper gown." Carley beamed at him. "We have a unisex one piece outfit for those tests, form fitting and quite flexible." Carley frowned, her imagination conjuring something like a leotard with the same blue and white patters on it as the paper gown.

In her mind, the gown was hideous looking.

"Your escort should be by here in a while to show you the way, Ms. Barnes. It shouldn't take too long, I don't think."

She harrumphed. With her luck it would be another nameless tech, or worse... a Furry Fan that

couldn't keep his hands off her.

The doctor left with only a "Good afternoon, Ms. Barnes." and then Carley was alone. She didn't quite like the idea of being poked and prodded like a lab rat... which made her all the more thankful she'd requested Robert the fox, and not Melvin Mouse, Roberts old college dorm room mate. Or worse, Rifferty Rafferty Rat. She shuddered at the idea of ending up looking like Riff Raff Rat. He was only a bit character, but still.

It was not long, in fact, before her escorts arrived. Both of them.

"Delva!" Carley jumped from the bed to embrace her lover. Delva looked like she had been crying, and very tired. Arianna waited by the door, hands holding a package she soon set aside and a smile on her lips. Delva almost flew into Carley's arm and they hugged, both starting to cry.

The embrace lasted a few minutes while the tears subsided and they gathered the reins in on their emotions again. Carley really didn't understand how they could get away with her like that, and took her a little bit longer than Delva, would been dealing with them all her life.

They drew back and looked at each other, then straitened their glasses almost with the same motion. Arianna blinked and the girls chuckled, hugging once again. This one didn't last quite as long.

"Wow, you're so warm and fuzzy." Carley giggled at this, but didn't know why she found it funny.

"Arianna told me that you stayed next to my bed nearly the entire time I was out... I cannot tell you how loved that makes me feel. But, but maybe I can show you." Delva arched and eyebrow as Carley drew her close.

The kiss was long and passionate, with a lot of tongue involved. It was a little awkward at first, till Carley got the hang of working around her fangs, but when they broke Carley caught a glimpse of Arianna wiping a tear from her eye. Delva gasped for breath.

"Wow... I... I never thought your tongue would be that long!" Carley giggled. Then she licked her eyebrow just to show off. "Oooof!"

Carley giggled again, covering her mouth.

"Well? Don't tease, Girl! Let's see the whole package! That gown does nothing for you." Arianna suggested from the doorway. Carley felt the heat in her cheeks and figured she was blushing... not that you could tell under her fur. She stepped back and undid the laces that held the dress on while kicking off the paper booties she was forced to wear by the 'New England prude' as she had taken to thinking of the nurse who insisted she stay fully clothed all the time.

She slide the gown off her shoulders slowly, teasingly, wiggling as she did so, and keeping as much of herself as she could until she decided that the time was right and let it drop to the floor, raising her arms above her head as she did so.

"Ta Da!" She said with a smile.

From the doorway Arianna gave a finger-twirl suggesting a pirouette. She did so, slowly, her tail swishing around her as she did so.

“Wow, you are gorgeous!” Delva stepped forward and ran her hand through the fur covering Carley’s belly. Then she used both hands to rub over Carley’s back. It quickly turned into a hug, then kissing again.

“Ok, ok... break it up or you two are going to make me jealous!” Arianna stepped up smiling a wicked little smile as she parted the other two women in the room.

That didn’t last long, it turned into a three-way hug. Carley felt guilty for leaving Arianna out of the second kiss, so she made up for it. Arianna was quite enthusiastic in returning the kiss and was breathing hard before long.

They broke it up all giggling like schoolgirls.

“I have something for you, dear.” Arianna said.

“Oh? A present? It’s not neon and 14 inches long, is it?” They giggled again.

“No, dear. I might be persuaded to get you one of your very own, however, if you’re a good little girl... or a very, very bad girl” Carley felt another blush warm her cheeks as Arianna chuckled evilly.

Arianna turned and picked up the package she had set aside and handed it to Carley. With a squeal of delight Carley accepted the package and jumped into her bed so she could open it sitting down... taking a moment to move her bushy tail out from under her.

She held the box up and shook it next to her ear and could hear fabric of some kind. She was excited, and a bit apprehensive at the sound, fearing that it would be the hideous blue and white leotard her mind had conjured.

Her tail twitched nervously as she looked at the box, trying to discern it’s origins from any markings on it. There were no markings, it was a plain white box. She opened it slowly.

“Ooooooooooh!” it was an outfit of black silk-like material. She ran a finger over it, then pulled it slowly out to look at it better. Delva was biting her knuckle, and Arianna had a whimsical smile on her lips. Carley held it up to better look at it. It had red piping that matched her fur color, and green trim around the collar that matched the highlights in her eyes, and it was indeed a one-piece outfit. A tear escaped and she broke into a grin as she clutched it to her breast.

“It’s beautiful!” She slid from the bed and embraced Delva. After a moment she practically ran to Arianna at the door and enveloped her in a hug. Arianna rubbed her hands through Carley’s fur, then allowed one of her hands to drop a bit low and grab a handful of Carley’s rear.

“Eeek! Hands!” Carley pulled back and playfully slapped Arianna’s hand. Arianna, of course, had a wicked grin on her face. Carley giggled, then spun around moving back to the bed to pick the outfit back up.

“Help me into it!” she said and she held it up trying to figure out why the zipper wasn’t on the front. Delva grasped the zipper at the back of the collar and lowered it. Carley’s eyes opened slightly at that.

“Oh...” she said sheepishly. “How... How does my tail fit?”

Delva looked perplexed, but Arianna stepped forward and pointed out the whole in the rear situated in just the right place for her tail.

They helped her into the outfit, it stretched to fit, and had built in ‘shoes’ and gloves. The gloves also had small slits for her claws, as did the shoes.

“Can you zip me up?” Delva stepped forward, but Arianna restrained her with a hand.

“That is one of the things all women need to be able to do themselves, dear. Let’s see if you can manage on your own first, then we can help if you have problems.” Delva had a sheepish look on her face, she hadn’t considered that.

Carley had a pleading look in her eyes, but sighed and reached behind her. It took a minute to find the zipper, which stopped an inch above her tail. A little pulling and adjusting of the set of her elbows got the zipper just shy of her collar... then she thought about it and reached over her shoulder to finish zipping it.

“Don’t let anyone tell you that a career in trouble shooting serves no practical purpose.” She declared as she spun around to look at the other two women in the room, a look of triumph on her face.

They applauded, then embraced in another group hug. Carley wrapped her tail around the three of them, tickling Arianna’s rear from around Delva’s.

Another long moment passed when Arianna pulled regretfully away and put her ‘game face’ on. Carley could tell by the look of it that she was at least trying to be all business about what she brought up next.

“Dear. You know why we are here, do you not?” Carley nodded.

“To escort me to more tests.”

“Carl... you...” Delva started to say, but Carley held up a hand.

“Please... Call me Carley. A... A friend named me that yesterday.” Arianna raised an eyebrow, but said nothing. She had seen the video and heard the conversation when she first arrived in the office today. Delva looked perplexed.

“Well... If I’m going to be a girl I need a girls name... don’t I?” She asked tentatively.

Delva tried the name on for size.

“Carley. Carley.” And as she said it a third time it seemed to fit. “Carley.” She said with more conviction. They smiled and hugged again. Arianna stayed near the foot of the bed, staying out of this

hug.

“Carley, you do not have to take these tests if you do not wish to.” Carley shook her head, her long tresses flowing across her shoulders.

“No, but I want to. I would like to know what I can do. I’ve... I’ve never been a girl before.”

* * *

They walked down a corridor toward the testing facility. Next to the door was a crudely hand written note that said “Danger Room” under the sign that proclaimed it to be the “Subject Evaluation Environment”.

“Comic book geeks on staff, eh?” Carley asked jerking a thumb toward the sign. Arianna chuckled.

They entered the room, it was a rather large gymnasium with lots of equipment, a few tightropes strung about at varying heights, balance beams, uneven bars and parallel bars, and what looked like a Nautilus machine in one corner.

Carley was a bit daunted looking at all the equipment, feeling she would indeed be using it all today.

She was right.

The tests started with the simple stuff, flexibility tests on a floor mat. An instructor walked her through each move, and helped her, as she hadn’t ever done most of what they asked her to do. The back flip ended badly the first time she tried, and ended up flat on her back with a sore tail, but after a few attempts and a initial helping hand from the instructor she managed 4 in a row in only a few minutes.

Cartwheels were a bit easier, and walking the balance beam was a cinch. Next was the lowest of the tightropes. It took her a few moments to get a good balance before she tried walking any distance. After a few feet she was walking on it as calmly as if she were on solid ground. She found as long as she used her tail to balance herself and kept her hip-swaying to a minimum it wasn’t too hard.

“Miss? Miss? We’re not ready for that yet. Miss!” the instructor said as Carley climbed to the highest tightrope she could find with a joyful giggle.

Arianna, and Delva watched from the observation room that was inevitably located behind a sound proof one-way mirror.

“Carley! Carley!” Delva called, but Arianna placed a hand on her shoulder.

“Let her do this. Some times subjects have to find their limits out for themselves... that and she can’t hear you, dear.”

Out in the Gym Carley had reached the top rope, which was probably 20 feet off the ground. She took a tentative step out onto the rope, then another. She quickened her pace till she was moving at a stiff

walk. She stopped in the middle of the rope giving it an experimental bounce. She retained her balance after an awkward moment, then with a joyous giggle she did a cartwheel on the rope.

The instructor gasped. With a laugh that could not be contained Carley did another and then a back flip to follow it up. She missed the rope and only just caught herself with a leg, rope caught under her knee.

“Oopsies!” she said hanging upside-down from the rope. Then reached up and took the rope in both hands but despite several tries she couldn’t manage to stand back up on the rope.

“Miss! Miss, I do say! That is more than enough showing off for now! You must come down, now!” Carley looked down at the instructor and with a flash of insight she knew he was gay. Mainly it was the position of his hands on his hips. No strait man Carley had ever known ever stood like that. Carley was hanging from the rope with both legs slung over it, and both hands holding tight. She looked down at the floor mat below her.

“Um... Mister Instructor... Why isn’t there a safety net?” the priss sighed at her.

“Well! If you hadn’t been in such a hurry to show off I would have been able to get Maintenance to rig it out for you. Since you couldn’t be bothered I guess you’ll just have to get that cute tail of yours down another way, now won’t you?” He smiled a somewhat unfriendly smirk at her. Carley looked up, or rather down at the floor.

“Hmmmm...” Carley considered it, then let go of the rope completely.

Delva and Arianna both sprang to their feet gasping.

In mid air Carley twisted around and landed on all fours. With a vicious grin she looked at the stupefied instructor and pounced on him from 10 feet away. She tucked him into a ball and she rolled, and pounded him into the floor mat flat on his back, a broad grin on her face which merely looked like a mouthful of bared fangs from his perspective.

“Pinned ya.” She winked.

“I... I’m... I’m sorry! I didn’t mean it!” he squealed, then with a very small voice he added “Please don’t eat me.”

With a wicked grin she licked his cheek running the entire length of her tongue from chin to brow, then stood up looking down at the terrified instructor. His face was almost as wet as his crotch. She held her nose as the first sent of him soiling himself reached her nose.

“Eew. I think we need a break... and you need a shower.” She turned her back on him and walked toward the door leading into the observation room.

Delva burst out of the door with Arianna strutting along behind her. Delva hit Carley without slowing and clasped her in a bear hug.

“You silly, silly fox! You could have been hurt!” it took a moment for Carley to get over the initial shock of the reprimand, and settled into a comfortable hug. The thought of getting hurt never even occurred to her.

“Well, that was interesting.” Arianna said as she closed on the pair. Then chuckled as she watched the instructor sulk off into the men’s room. “I think we will take a break for lunch before we continue. That will give housekeeping a change to clean up here.”

They broke for lunch with a unanimous vote.

* * *

Carley ate with a ravenous hunger she couldn’t explain, going back for thirds at the Chinese buffet that was set up in The Company cafeteria on the third floor. She was receiving looks from almost everyone, and most people didn’t bother to try and hide them.

Mostly they looked envious, for of course they knew who she was. The lotto had not been all that long ago and it didn’t take a rocket scientist to put two and two together.

Of course, there were a couple rocket scientists in the room, and they had rather appreciative looks on their faces... wither from her presence or Arianna’s, she couldn’t tell.

“Slow down, girl. That’s Moo-Goo-Gi-Pan, and if you eat it too fast you will get the hiccups!” Delva admonished her. Carley giggled between bites and tried to slow down a bit. The noodles just had to be slurped one at a time, she almost couldn’t help herself.

Arianna ate with quite a bit more decor, but had an understanding look on her face, as Carley started ripping into some teriyaki chicken wings.

Carley’s ear twitched as she thought she heard her name spoken somewhere nearby. She rotated her ear a bit to locate it.

“I tell you Francie... That’s that Barnes who won the Company Lottery last month.”

“You have got to be mistaken, Ashley. Barnes was a man, and unless I am completely mistaken... That’s no man sitting over there.” The one named Francie said.

“Don’t you remember anything? Last year there was a big how-to-do over the athlete that ‘changed-teams’ just before the Olympics. Said he never felt so liberated then when he became a woman. The press had a field day, if you’ll pardon the pun, with tearing into the other countries that protested.” The one named Ashley retorted.

“I remember rightly... but why would anyone wanna do that? He wasn’t gay... was he?” Carley almost bit her tongue at that. She flickered an eye in that general direction and saw a couple of middle aged women with nothing better to do than gossip about other people over lunch.

“You see how she’s gnawing on that chicken bone, Francie? Like a common dog.”

The bone snapped in her teeth as she bit down on it. She turned and looked directly at the two women, but Arianna placed a hand on her shoulder, turning her back to the table.

“Ignore them, dear. They gossip about every one, and no one takes them seriously.” Carley spit the

bone shards out on her plate.

“Did you hear what they were saying about me?”

“Yes, dear. And I said ignore them.” She picked up her coffee and took a sip looking into Carley’s angry eyes. “Consider it an order if you must. I will not allow you to bring bad press to The Company by tearing two worthless hags to shreds... even if they do deserve it.”

Carley giggled at that, Delva looked between them wondering what the heck they were talking about.

They filled her in on the way back to the Gym, after a cheesecake dessert of course.

* * *

“Well, I’d say that you’re as stronger than your average Triathlon competitor.” The instructor said after Carley had done a few hundred bench presses at 400 pounds. “Shall we try the leg press now, dear?”

“Sure.” Carley said as she wiped a bead of sweat off her forehead with the back of her hand.

The instructor set up the Nautilus machine, and set the pin for 800 pounds.

“Ok, missy... try that.” He said with a self-satisfied smirk. He was in very good shape for a man his age, mid-forties, and he had trouble with that much weight.

Carley settled into the machine putting her feet on the lower of the two footrests.

“No, no, no. The other ones... yes, those.” He said as Carley placed her feet on the higher of the two sets of footrests. He smirked behind her back ‘Try that, bitch.’ He thought.

Carley grabbed the handholds and bared down. There was a gasp from behind her as she cleared the top mark with a grunt. She then proceeded to do 50 reps before her thighs started to burn and she stopped, sweat soaking her face.

“There.” She gasped “How was that?” she was breathing really hard and wiped her face with a cloth she’d picked up off the floor.

The instructor was flabbergasted.

“Well... um... that was... really good, I guess... for a girl.” He dismissed. He was not about to admit her couldn’t have done it.

“What’s next? Jumping jacks?” she asked sardonically.

The instructor recovered his composure.

“No... I think we’d try the treadmill next.” And he walked over there, not bothering to help her up.

Carley’s legs were a bit shaky at first, but she walked around the room to stretch the kinks out before she stopped in front of the treadmill. It was unusually long, she thought, at least a good 8 feet. It also

looked like it could climb to a 45-degree angle.

“I’ll start you off slow, and work it up from there.” She stepped on. The instructor punched a few buttons as Carley walked to the middle of the treadmill. After a moment it started to move. She started at a very slow walking pace, and she couldn’t help but strut and swish her tail a bit theatrically.

She was just starting to enjoy showing off her hip movement when it sped up a bit. She kept pace, swishing away with a sultry strut.

Then it sped up a bit more and she was going at a decently fast walk. She stopped strutting to keep her place in the middle of the machine. After a moment it sped up again and she was Power Walking to keep up.

Then it sped up again and she had to jog, parts of her anatomy bouncing under the outfit that attempted to restrain her.

Then it sped up again, and another moment sped up again. She was running now, swinging her arms and trying to keep her tail from tangling her legs. She found if she kept it out directly behind her with a little concentration she did better.

It sped up again, then again. She was sprinting now but she was not losing ground. When it sped up again she couldn’t keep up and started to slowly move to the rear of the machine.

The instructor adjusted the treadmill and let her slowly creep back to the middle of the belt. After a moment he pressed another button and it started to incline.

Carley kept pace as it paced with it as it passed 10degrees. At 20degrees she started to struggle. At 30 degrees she started to move slowly to the rear of the machine, but the instructor didn’t move as he watched her fascinated.

At 40degrees she had to dig into her reserves to keep on the machine, but she somehow managed, her heels coming off the end of the treadmill belt. When it hit 45degrees she fell off, her tail tangling around her legs as she hit the ground.

The instructor turned the machine off and it returned to level, slowing to a stop.

“You... you ok, miss?” he asked as he approached her, offering a hand to help her up.

She looked up and took his hand. He pulled her easily to her feet.

“I... Think... I... Might... Need... Some water...” she gasped.

“You just walk around a bit, I’ll get it.” She smiled at him and started walking slowly around the room. He walked to the water cooler near the mirror and as he drew a paper cup’s worth of water.

As Carley walked past him he handed her the water. She downed it and crumpled it in her hand. She held it till she got back to the water cooler, tossing it in the wastebasket next to it. The instructor handed her another cup of water.

After a couple laps and a few more cups of water she stopped in front of the water cooler.

“How was that?” she asked.

“Very good, 15 miles per hour. Equal to a 4 minute mile sustained at a 30 degree incline.” He put his hands on his hips. “I must admit that I am impressed.”

Carley felt the heat of a blush creep into her cheeks.

“Thanks.”

“You covered 14.3 miles.” Carley blinked.

“You’re joking... right?” He shook his head. “Fourteen miles?” He nodded. She lent against the wall for support. “How... How could I have been on that thing for an hour and not noticed the time?”

He chuckled.

“Time flies when we’re having fun, missy.” He winked at her.

Arianna spoke from the doorway, somehow Carley hadn’t noticed the door opening.

“I think we will take a short break, David, before we continue with the endurance testing.” Carley groaned.

“Yes, Ma’am.” And he wandered off to the men’s locker room again.

Arianna approached Carley and placed a hand on her shoulder.

“I am quite impressed. We were not sure how much was added to your abilities, but now we have a much better idea.”

Carley felt another blush creep up her cheeks.

“Thanks. I don’t think I have ever run more than a mile before in my life... and now I can cover 14 miles.”

“Wow.” Delva stepped around Arianna. Carley beamed, and straightened her glasses.

“What’s next? Ping-pong?” Carley asked mischievously. Arianna grinned back.

“Close. Dodge ball.” Carley arched an eyebrow. “But with a twist, of course.” Arianna had a wicked grin on her face again.

“Of course.” Carley said sardonically.

* * *

They were in a racquetball room with 12 tennis ball launchers near the glass pointed at the far wall.

“Ok, this is a little different from the dodge ball you played in school, Carley.”

“No, really?” she asked sarcastically. Arianna just grinned and continued.

“In every launcher there are yellow balls, and blue balls.” She chuckled wickedly at that. “You have to dodge the yellow ones, but you’re allowed to hit the blue ones out of your way.”

“You are a cruel woman, Ms. Brockhouse.” The instructor said. All three women giggled. He threw his hands up with an exaggerated sigh.

“Shall we begin then?” Arianna asked. Carley nodded.

As Carley stepped in she saw that all twelve launchers were hooked up to a computer just outside of the glass enclosure, and three seats, one directly in front of the computer. The instructor took this seat and started pressing buttons.

“Just step up to the tape on the floor, please, Ms. Barnes.” She reached the taped “X” on the floor and bowed. That had been the first time he had used her name.

Arianna winked at Carley, and Delva blew a kiss. Carley felt a blush again, and a puff of wind as the first yellow ball streaked past her cheek.

The next ball was directed right at her, she dodged the yellow ball, but it struck her tail.

“OW!” but she didn’t have time to protest as the second launcher puffed and a ball came toward her. It was blue, she batted it aside with her left palm.

Then it started to get interesting. The balls started coming at her faster and from more directions. She dodged, twisted, ducked, and swapped as fast as she could keep up, she found she could flick her tail and get the blue balls that when behind her, and as long as she was expecting it that it didn’t hurt... too much anyway.

After a few minutes she started to get the rhythm of the launchers and it became a dance. She jumped, twirled, rolled across the floor, and jogged in place as if she were performing in ‘Flash Dance’. She even started making it a game to hit the blue balls out the open door at the instructor behind the machine.

He grinned and turned up the pace again. All twelve machines were going full bore now, and she ended up getting pelted as often as not, by both yellow and blue balls.

Finally the flurry stopped with the launchers still puffing air, all the balls expended from their hoppers. Carley collapsed on the floor panting. Then she noticed that the balls were rolling toward the glass.

She stood up and walked toward the door, kicking the balls out from under her feet so she wouldn’t end up falling on her tail again.

“Hmmm... 43 percent with all twelve launchers going. I can only manage 51 percent with 6 launchers.” The instructor complimented her. He offered his hand, and she shook it firmly twice.

Delva jumped to her feet and hugged Carley who accepted it warmly. Arianna stood and bid the instructor a good day.

“What? No more tests?” Carley asked.

Arianna grinned wickedly.

“Oh yes, there is another test. The hardest test of all.” Carley felt a chill running up her spine, but hedged a guess.

“Trying to keep your hands off me?” Arianna chuckled seductively.

“No... But that is an idea.” She winked.

* * *

“Fashion Scents? You brought me to Fashion Scents?” Carley asked perplexed. Not only was this the first time she’d been out of the building in three weeks, she was also accompanied by her lover and Ms. Brockhouse... who had to sign autographs and fend off a few suitors as they wandered through the mall.

Carley had a few people approach her too, but ignored these, unsure how to politely brush them off.

“What better place?” Arianna asked archly as she strutted in the front doors as if she owned the place.

She held stock in the company, of course, so in a sense she did own the place.

A helpful sales clerk saw them approaching and beamed a warm smile.

“Miss Brockhouse! A pleasure to see you again!” her nametag read ‘Tammy’.

“Is Jolene around, dear?”

“I’ll call her at once, Ma’am!” and Tammy picked up the phone and dialed.

“Mrs. Waterly? This is Tammy down at the front desk. Yes, Ma’am, I’m sorry to disturb you but... Ma’am. I understand, Ma’am, but. No Ma’am, I don’t wish to be demoted to nightshift stock room... Please, Misses... Arianna Brockhouse is here asking for you!” there was an exclamation from the other side of the phone and Tammy pulled it away from her ear a bit too late to avoid getting it full in the ear. “Yes, Ma’am. I’ll tell her.” She hung up the phone with a sigh.

“She’ll be right down, Ms. Brockhouse.” She said with a smile.

Arianna leaned suggestively against the desk.

“Mind if I wait right here?” the girl giggled nervously.

“N... No Ma’am! Not at all.” She put her hand over her mouth.

'If she's a B-cup and 19, I'd be surprised' Carley thought as she shifted her weight from one foot to the other, clasping her hands together below her waist.

"Oh my god! Ohmygodohmygod! You're... You're Carl Barnes aren't you?!?" Tammy exclaimed pointing directly at Carley. She blushed.

"Um... My name is Carley, now... but..."

"Ohmygodohmygod! I can't wait to tell my friends I met you! They'll never believe me! Ohmygodohmygod! May I shake your hand, Ms. Barnes?" Sheepishly Carley stepped up to the desk and extended her hand. The young girl grabbed it with both hands and started pumping furiously.

"Ohmygodohmygod! I can't believe it! Look at you! I love the fur! It's so rich! And the color! Ohmygodohmygod!" The girl was practically bouncing with joy. Carley was blushing furiously and smiling.

Carley was saved by the timely arrival of Mrs. Waterly.

"Miss Brockhouse, my dear! You look marvelous as always!"

"Jolene! A pleasure as always!" The hugged and exchanged faux cheek-kisses.

"And who are your friends. Oh my. You must be... Miss? Barnes I take it." She extended one well-manicured hand toward Carley, who took it gently. After a mere clasp Jolene let go and turned back to Arianna.

"So, I take you have come to spend more of your ill-gotten gains in my humble establishment?"

"Yes, dear. Ms. Barnes here needs a new wardrobe, as you can see." Arianna proffered a hand towards Carley. "Her old wardrobe just will not do."

"No, I would not think so. Well, I have just the thing for a new woman, our newest line! I think you will find a few things you like as well, Ms. Brockhouse."

Arianna gave a non-committal "Mmmm." As she followed Mrs. Waterly toward the back of the store. Delva took Carley by the hand and lead her into the maze that was a woman's specialty store.

As a man, Carley had never ventured into one, not even on accident. Now she was just daunted. She never imagined that there were so many styles of shirts, blouses, skirts, pants, and hemlines. There were easily enough pocketbooks, handbags, and famine wallets to outfit every woman in Carley's housing building. She even saw a few 'personal' items of clothing, the kind that normally arrive in plain wrapping bearing the name "Fredrick's" on them.

Carley saw a rather fetching outfit on a manikin across the room, but was dragged onward, into the teeth of the dragon.

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Carley endured the runway fashion show only by biting her knuckles, once drawing blood. The outfits were horrid. She couldn't imagine the models wearing them, let alone her! Some of them were so reviling you could count the blonde waifs' ribs! Not to mention not a single one of them had more than an 'A' cup while Carley figured she had a good solid, if somewhat jiggley, 'C' cup.

"So, my dear. See anything you like?" Jolene asked.

"Um... I really don't know what to say. They are all so..." Carley said, but was interrupted.

"Yes, yes, my dear, I know." Jolene said self-importantly. "Marvelous, aren't they? I designed them myself, you know."

"Now, now, Jolene. Praying on a new woman's vanity is most unbecoming, you know." Arianna chuckled.

"I know, I know. I am a horrid person." She grinned. "But I do love to show my personal collection, as you well know, Ms. Brockhouse."

Delva caught on to the act, but said nothing. Carley seemed to sense a change in Delva, and looked to her across Arianna's bosom. She had a smirk that all but screamed 'What a Sham! Arianna's playing with her.' But Carley was unsure who was being played with... Her or Mrs. Waterly.

"Um, Mrs. Waterly?"

"Please, dear, call me Jolene. I insist all my good customers do." She smiled a fake kind of smile.

"Mrs. Jolene..." Mrs. Waterly smiled. "It's all a bit much for me right now... to decide which I like best of course..." Carley hedged. "Would it be ok if I... look at a few... more practical outfits before decided?"

Delva silently clapped behind Jolene's back. Carley figured that meant she used the right approach.

"Of course, of course, my dear! You must see the plain, ordinary outfits as a comparison to my marvelous works d' art!" Jolene smiled, and Carley knew it was fake. "Please, do not let me hold you too long. You absolutely must buy one of my outfits before you go, however!"

Delva lead Carley from the room, but not out of Carley's earshot. Carley's ear twitched.

"She hated them, didn't she, Arianna?"

"Of course, you have dreadful taste in models and clothing, Jolene. Haven't I been saying that for years now?" They shared a chuckle. "I take it these were the ones turned down in Paris last year?"

"Yes." Jolene sighed. "They have no appreciation for an artist such as myself, dear."

"At least she passed the test. Had she actually picked one, I would have known she was crazy." They chuckled again and Carley grinned.

"What?" Delva asked. Carley told her, Delva winked. "She told me this morning that she was going to

pull this on you.” Carley arched an eyebrow.

“Spending time together, again?” Delva playfully slapped her arm.

“Just coffee and conversation. Nothing... extra-curricular.” She blushed. Extra-curricular activities were Arianna’s favorite form of entertainment. But Carley had a feeling that Delva was telling the truth in the matter. She let it drop.

Carley’s ear twitched again and from inside the room she heard the two ladies talking again.

“We’ll just let them shop the... oh, how did you put that? ‘The plain, ordinary, mundane outfits’ before I take her someplace else for more personal items.” Jolene chuckled at that.

“Well, my modest collection out of the floor is not without hope, you know. But one must shop around, I guess.” She sniffed tragically.

Carley pulled Delva away from the doorway.

“Let’s browse a bit. I thought I saw something I liked... Um...” she looked around and pointed off to a corner. “That way, I think.”

They found a couple items they both liked on the way over to the wall, and they gathered them up like a vintner selecting only the best grapes for the best vintage of the year.

When they finally arrived, Carley finally laid her eyes on the outfit she’d seen. There was a blue midriff t-shirt bearing the logo ‘Earthtones’, a button-fly light blue jean shorts with the legs folded up inside out a few inches, matching blue jean belt, and a MP3 player hanging off the belt.

Delva looked at it critically, walking around it and rubbing her chin. Carley followed her also looking at the outfit.

“Cute. Comfortable. Functional.”

“With as warm as I am now with all this fur, I think it’d be nice to get a little air... if you know what I mean.”

Delva thought about it. Carley’s ear twitched again, there was a muffled ‘ohmygodohmygod’ from a few rows away.

“Tammy, dear?” Carley asked a little louder than she intended.

“Yes, ma’am? Ms. Barnes! Oh, it’s you again! May I assist you in any fashion? I’d be more than happy...” And Carley shut her up by pointing toward the outfit.

“I’d like to try that on, please. If you wouldn’t mind.”

“No, Ma’am! I’ll get a set and be right back!” She scurried off like a rat in a maze looking for the cheese. In this case, the cheese was a sale to a celebrity.

Carley blinked. She hadn't thought of herself as a celebrity before. But as she thought about it, it did seem to fit. Nearly all of the Lottery winners were at least partly famous with Mister Fabulous being the most famous of all.

She blushed under her fur. Tammy returned with a pair of packages clutched to her under-developed chest. She was practically bouncing with excitement again. Carley took the packages from Tammy, and with a glance at Delva she winked.

"Tammy, would you be a dear and hold these for us while Carley tries this on?" Delva asked, sharing a wicked grin with Carley.

"Yes, Ma'am! I'd love to! Anything you wish!" Tammy took the clothing from Delva. "The dressing rooms are this way, Ms. Barnes!" And lead off almost running. Carley and Delva snickered and followed.

Carley peeled herself out of the black outfit she'd been wearing since that morning, and on a whim checked the label. 'Genson High Technology Agency - Maximum Wear' the label proclaimed. It also said it was a Gortex-Nomex-Kevlar weave and had a patent number across the bottom.

No wonder I wasn't overheating. She thought. Gortex was notorious worldwide for its ability to wick heat and sweat away from the body. It stretched and was form fitting, all in all very comfortable. She decided to ask if she was allowed to keep it... but she'd need something to carry personal items in as there were no pockets in it.

She put the shirt and shorts on, fastening the belt with the matching button. It was a bit loose on her, and she had to run her tail down one leg as there was no hole for it to protrude. If it had been any tighter it would have been very uncomfortable for her. She looked in the full length mirror.

Fetching came to mind. She liked it, and with only a minor alteration she would love it. She decided to show Delva and stepped out of the fitting room.

Tammy gasped, bouncing up and down with joy. Delva looked her over critically. Carley gave her a pirouette.

"We must do something for your tail." She commented.

"And they are a bit big on me. Once there is a hole for my tail I think I'll love them!"

Arianna walked over with Jolene in tow. She looked over Carley and nodded with a smile. Jolene raised a critical eyebrow and nodded as well.

"Very nice, dear. Good choice I think."

"I think you have someone on staff that could fix her... Um... Little problem, Jolene?" Arianna ventured.

Jolene stepped forward and gave a tug at the belt noting the excess, then waltzed around Carley with an eye for clothing.

“Hmmm... Yes, I think I can make arrangements for that. Shouldn’t take more than an hour.”

Tammy bounced with glee again, and Jolene finally noticed her.

“Ah...” she looked at Tammy’s name tag “Tammy, is it? Do be a dear and see that Carlos gets those for alteration. And make sure to bring him a new set of these as well.” Proffering a hand toward Carley’s outfit. “Make sure you get the right size, these are entirely too big for her. One good bounce and they would fall right off her! Two sizes smaller than... whatever these are I think.”

Jolene and Arianna shared a wink.

“Yes Ma’am! I’m on it! Right away, Ma’am!” she scurried off again.

“She’s not the smartest I have on staff, but her enthusiasm makes up for a lot of shortcomings... I think.” Jolene said as if not really sure she could stand someone with that much energy around her for more than a few moments at a time.

Delva and Carley shared a look of agreement to that sentiment.

* * *

Carley was back in her black Maximum Wear outfit as they wandered around the mall toward another store that Carley had never been in, on purpose anyway. She had walked in once a couple years ago while not really paying attention and accidentally put his hand into a display of panties, which embarrassed him considerable with all the giggles from the sales girls as he left.

Arianna took charge here, picking the sexiest and skimpiest things she seemed to be able to find. Almost everything was silk, or satin. There was not a single “boring” thing she picked. Some were white, black, fire engine red, pink, and one green thing Carley couldn’t even name that not only matched the highlights in her eyes, but also relived all of the “Fun-bits” as Arianna described them.

Crotch-less panties had not really been that high on Carley’s list of things to purchase, but she ended up with a half-dozen none the less.

Her worse embarrassment came when Arianna insisted that she try on what the sales woman described as a ‘Baby-doll’ outfit that was so sheer she might as well not have worn anything at all. It was a rich red, and was just dark enough that you could tell where her fur started and the outfit stopped.

There were wolf-whistles from several men that had wandered in to see Ms. Brockhouse in person, and were treated to the full barely clothed vision of Carley in the Baby-doll.

She blushed under her fur, and shyly winked at the men, covering her nose with a hand and curtsying. This earned her a few more wolf-whistles and an ovation of applause.

Delva waited for the bulk of the applause to die down and shooed the gawker's away.

With much relief Carley got out of the getup and slipped back into the Maximum Wear.

“Ms. Brockhouse?” she asked through the door as she was changing.

“Yes dear?”

“Um... I know it’s probably an unusual request but...” Arianna chuckled wickedly.

“You want me to help you out of that?” Carley blushed.

“No! I mean, no, Ma’am. I was... well, This Maximum Wear thing... I was wondering if... well...”

Arianna and Delva both chuckled sharing a look.

“Yes dear, you may keep it if you like it that much.”

“Really? I mean, really?!”

“Yes dear.”

* * *

Carley sat at the desk tapping her nails against the polished surface and listening to the scientists go over and over all the little details that she couldn’t follow. They had been at this for hours, and she was more than bored, she was getting angry.

That alone did nothing for her mood, but that fact that Carl had always been a push over that never spoke up for himself... now she had to deal with all of that and be stuck in a form of a woman that she hadn’t chosen.

Ok, the anthropomorphic fox had been her idea, but she distinctly remembered wanting to stay male. Her ear twitched.

“Pammy, I’m going to step out for a moment while the lights are down. If any one should ask...” Ms. Brockhouse whispered to her secretary.

“Important phone call, yes Ma’am.” Pammy nodded. Arianna stood up while most people were watching the scientist at the head of the table, and snuck out without a sound.

If she can do it, so can I thought Carley. She slipped from her chair and merged with the shadows in her Maximum Wear outfit, then paced to the door and out it. Pammy watched her leave, but made no sign nor sound.

Arianna was already at the far end of the hall. Carley ran to catch up, grasping Arianna’s shoulder.

Arianna jumped in surprise.

“Carley! You scared me!”

“Sorry Ma’am. I just... I just couldn’t sit there any more.”

“Me either. They are always like that. It’s bad enough for them to say they can’t fix it, but to spend

hours telling you exactly what they can't fix is just too much!"

"Always? How often does it happen?" Carley asked in a worried tone.

"Not often enough to get your panties in a twist over. But for the record nine times. Irreversible's are always puzzling because we don't know why they are irreversible!" she sighed "Maybe if we did we could either prevent it or at least anticipate it from time to time."

Arianna looked down for a moment, then back up in Carley's eyes.

"I'm going for a coffee, care to join me?" Carley smiled.

"Sure."

* * *

Coffee was a slight misnomer. Triple Espresso Carmel Mocha with three extra shots of espresso and topped with cold milk is what it actually ended up being, in addition to \$12 a piece, plus Danish.

* * *

The Company Does NOT Make Mistakes A Genson High Technology Agency story By Straycat

The cameras had red lights on again, and someone just off camera counted down on his fingers from 5. On one he pointed at Janet and she started talking in a totally faked pleasant tone.

"This is Janet Montfleurie, and in just a moment we will reveal to the world Carl Barnes, the latest Genson Lottery winner. As a reminder twenty-five people have won the lottery before him, and many more will afterwards, but he is our man of the hour." She turned to the 'stage door' for the reveal. "And here he is now!"

Carley had been waiting behind the door waiting for the Que. She was a tad annoyed that the male pronoun was being used considering that she could no longer apply it to herself any longer, nor could she return to male-dom by the miracle of modern science. She burst through the door as she's been instructed to with a big, but not toothy, smile on her face. She had twelve steps to the seat she was to claim for the interview and she could not help doing a pirouette and letting the saffron mid-calf frilly sundress twirl about her, then settled into her seat. It was even more uncomfortable now with a tail then it had been before.

Janet turned away from the camera to look at Carley with completely fake look of interest. "Greetings Carl, pleasure to have you here tonight."

"Thank you Janet, and I go by Carley now." She held her hands in her lap and sat with her ankles crossed and knees together.

"Just for the record, you are the Carl Meriwether Barnes that I interviewed several weeks ago, correct?"

"Yes I am. And I prefer the name Carley."

"Why did you decide to become female, Carl?"

"I go by Carley now... and it was a last minute thing. I decided that it would be unfair of me to require a mate to bare children with such and outlandish appearance. However for a mother to bare offspring of her own resemblance would not be too unusual."

"So... you changed your gender so you could have offspring... I take it you have a mate in mind already, Carl?"

Carley Bristled a bit. "Carley, and no I do not as of yet. Merely planning for the future."

"Surely with your predatory nature stalking around the city no alpha male is safe..." Janet smirked a wicked grin as Carley growled.

"I am Not an animal, bitch. I am human. And this isn't about you. It is about me. You will have to pardon me if my newfound appearance has given me a slight case of vanity, but I am not here so you can exercise your predatory nature as a former gossip columnist." As Carley spoke she was flexing her claws. "But if you wish to find out who the alpha is right here and right now I think I'd be willing to make you grovel like a whipped cur!"

Janet blanched for a moment. She knew entirely too well what would happen if they got into a fight on stage; she would get her ass kicked on national television, not to mention she would loose her interviewing contract. Janet only fought with words and lawyers for a very good reason, because like any good bully, she was a coward. Now... how to cover it up and make it seem like this is what she meant to happen? She swallowed before speaking with a slow smile.

"I am glad to see you are not longer the timid geek I had here last time. Being a fully liberated woman has definitely increased your self-esteem I see. So, tell me; how much do you enjoy being a woman now?" Janet leveled an almost lusty gaze at Carley, and that's when Carley understood that she'd won. The battle of the wills was over and she'd come out the winner. That look was more envy than anything, but partly camouflage for a wounded ego.

There were rules to this sort of game, and Carley realized that she'd have to play nice with this bitch, since the bitch capitulated so easily and in public. She relaxed and let out a small sigh.

"There are some things I enjoy more than others. The softness, the feel of silks. ..." Carley paused a moment and then licked her eyebrow, Janet blinked. "The friends I have made. Somehow being a woman makes friends all that much closer and more important. As a male, friends are a sometimes

thing. Most men, I think, have friends only when they are done being alone. I know that I used to go weeks without talking to anyone outside of work, but not anymore. Now I understand why women go to the restroom with a friend. Women are far more social than men are. I truly believe that half of men could go off and do the 'Mountain Man' thing and not look back as long as they could have their minor modern convenience's, whereas women are the truly progressive ones. The ones that brought the world into modern times." Janet's smile seemed genuine as she spoke.

"Sounds like we have a convert to feminism, folks! And there is no one more fanatical than a convert." She winked at the camera and saw the stage manager give her the wrap-up signal. With a deep voice she intoned "Gentlemen, you have been warned!" she chuckled. "Well, that seems to be all the time we have tonight. Carley, it was a pleasure having you here tonight!"

"I was my pleasure to be here, Janet. It was so nice to see you again."

"Of course, we will have to go out for hot-cocoa some time." She turned to the middle camera. "This is Janet Montfleurie bidding you a good evening."

"CUT!" a rather stuffy looking man wandered out from between the cameras as the crew started to swarm the set. "Wonderful, Janet, Just Wonderful!"

To her credit Janet smiled and extended a hand to Carley who blinked then took it for a quick shake.

"I do hope that we can go for some hot-coca some time. I would be interested in your perspective on life now, if you find you have the time in your busy schedule, that is."

"I am sure I will keep that in mind, Janet."

"Good day, Miss Barnes." And with that Janet retreated to her dressing room. Carley watched her leave and then turned away and almost ran snout to cleavage with Arianna. Carley gave a slight yelp in surprised. Arianna chuckled.

"Well, that was interesting." Arianna purred.

"You startled me!" Arianna chuckled wickedly

"Nice to know I haven't lost my touch."

"No Touching!" quipped Carley playfully.

"You do know that after an interview like this you are going to be quite the celebrity for a while, don't you?" Carley nodded and looked around a bit. "And all sorts of people will be approaching you to do all sorts of things, right?" Carley started to nod, but turned slowly with wide eyes. "And since you are still under contract any business proposals that anyone offers you has to come through my office first, correct?"

Carley placed a hand on her mouth. Thought for a moment, and nodded with a bit of relief. Arianna was going to run interference, which was a bit of a comfort.

It also meant that she would have to be alone with her several times a week... she was not quite sure if

she was as safe from Arianna as Arianna would make her safe from all of the other predators.

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Carley awoke the next morning with a rather unpleasant knot in her stomach. She was uncomfortably hot, stiff and sore in places she really wasn't ready to think about.

'Coffee... must get coffee' she thought.

Phil had been there already, and the carafe was right where she needed it to be. After two cups she took a shower, and only just noticed the added fur-dryers. There were three of them about head height and on a stand, and all three pointed down towards the floor, but slightly inward. They were marked 'XLERATOR' and the rack had been bolted to the floor.

The first triple blast of 88mph hot air took her completely by surprise, but after a few moments it was a luxury that she didn't know she missed in life! She was completely dry in just over a minute.

She relaxed in front of the computer checking her web-comics for the day, but still didn't quite feel right. Her stomach was all knotted up. She was so distracted by the pain she almost missed Robert the Fox and Regina fox getting married finally, seeing that Regina's middle name was now 'Carley' (and a note saying that she'd been named that 3 years ago, but no one had noticed. He gave the number of the comic, but that one had been "off-line" for a couple hours for "repairs"... no one believed him) and that Bruce the Bear was maid of honor with Brono (his current boyfriend) as best man.

At lunch she was snappish with the cafeteria staff. The only reason she left the room was that she was getting moody by herself and needed to get out and walk around, she thought. After almost literally biting the hand that feed her, she decided that she wasn't all that hungry after all and stormed back to her room where she promptly had a crying fit... which only made her head pound worse.

Delva showed up as soon as her job allowed, which was about 3pm. She found Carley in a bit of a tizzy while alternating between tearing the bed coverings to shreds and crying because she broke something. It took all of one sniff of the air to know instinctively what the problem was.

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Don't ask me how she knew, my nose is perpetually clogged and mostly decorative in any case... I cannot smell a bloody thing.

Doh! Bad pun! I'm Sorry!

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"There, there..." Delva said while hugging Carley and rubbing a hand across her furry back. "I have something that will help."

"It's just that..." Carley sniffed "that every time I think," she sniffed again, calming slowly with Delva's comforting presence "Think I know what I want I'm wrong!"

Delva made a few rocking motions and shushing noises while cradling Carley's head on her shoulder.

After a moment she repeated “I have something that will help.”

“You do?” Carley asked plaintively.

“Yes, it’s in my purse.” She leaned down to her purse that had gotten dropped at the foot of the now completely ruined bed, and withdrew a white bottle with a blue label. It was her emergency stash, and it was also industrial strength.

She had Carley take two Midol with a full glass of water, and tried to distract her with remaking the bed while waiting for the worst of the edge to be taken off.

Once she was sure that Carley was at least sane again, she remembered the other half of it and took out the appropriate supplies from her purse and began explaining their usage.

Half horrified, half relieved, half aghast, and half thinking ‘Duh, I knew that’ she finally spoke.

“You put that plug-thing where?”

“It’s probably best if we stick... Stay with the panty-liners for now. The... Tampons take a bit of getting used to, and you have enough on your platter to get used to as it is.”

* * *

Dinner came and Carley was almost sociable again, or at least enough so that she was willing to try the cafeteria for food again. She was just sitting down with a nice Cobb salad when she overheard those two dam gossiping biddies again, and decided that she was going to ask them nicely to stop...

I guess that depends on your point of view as to what ‘nice’ is...

Carley was approaching the table and boldly right in front of her they started talking about her, but tried to be quite till she got ‘within earshot’, which to Carley was anywhere in the room, but they didn’t know that.

“Excuse me, I could help but over hear some of your comments...” She began, then saw ‘The Look’ pass between them. You know, the look that says ‘My what big ears you have!’

‘That’s Fucking It!’ she thought, and reached out for Ashley’s still closed cola, grasped it in her left hand, and crushed the unopened can causing the cola to explode all over the shocked Francie.

“As I was trying to say... Please. Stop. Talking. About. Me. When I can hear you from anywhere in this room, even over the noise.” She snarled and dropped the can back onto the table. She walked back to her table, and the room was completely silent till she finished eating and left. It then burbled back to the usual conversation levels as if nothing had happened.

* * *

The next mornings email included a bill statement charged to her room: two dinners, two sets of dry cleaning, one table and floor mopping charge, and one diet caffeine free cola with Splenda.

There was also a request that she avail herself of the wonderful Dine-In Room Service that The Company offered.

“That’s just fucking great...” as she dropped her head into her hands.

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