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Might as Well Be A Girl

Amanda Hawkins

Uhm... Alicia? I hate to be a par-tay pooper, but how much longer do I have to stay like this? I agreed to the makeover because you said that's what a cool guy like myself would do for his precious sister. But all this hair is driving me nuts.

I know it's a fancy wig you borrowed from that store you work at, and you had to go and glue it to my head for some weird reason, but I've had enough. How about we get with the solvent and put it back where you found it? I'd hate for you get in trouble.

Amanda
Hawkins

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Alicia Keyes examined her creation with no small measure of satisfaction. She just *knew* Marc would turn out gorgeous, although this was beyond anything she could have imagined. “Ah, yeah... about that. I’m not the one who’s in trouble, Megan. Do you mind if I call you Megan? That would’ve been my sister’s name if I ever had a little sister.” She sighed, reflecting that maybe now she *did*. “Anyhow, I talked to my boss while you were slipping into that sexy little dress. The good news is, she doesn’t want the wig back after all. Or rather, it’s not so much her not *wanting* it back—it’s more like there’s no point in us even trying to give it back. Now that it’s your own hair and all.”

“Wait, what? This is my own hair? How is that ev—?”

“Long story short: the wig was cursed. Who knew, right?” She shrugged. “Turns out, if a guy wears the wig and leaves it on too long—which you totally did—then it attaches itself to him and turns into real hair. Sooo, you aren’t actually wearing a wig anymore—that hair is all yours, babe. But hey, at least it’s gorgeous, right? Most girls would kill for tresses like that.”

Megan just stared, her face draped in a mixture of horror, disbelief and fear. The phone slipped from her gloved fingers. Alicia stooped to pick it up.

“Speaking of which... once the magic burrows into your head, it spreads through the rest of your body. That’s why you’ve got such a pretty face; it’s not all down to my mad makeup skillz. It’s also why you’re about to turn into an actual female. You may not have noticed, but I can see your boobs growing from here. It won’t be long before your dipstick disappears for keepsies.”

Megan clutched at her chest. “You can’t be ser—” Her breath sucked in, her eyes went wide, and her legs slammed shut—perhaps a last-ditch attempt by the male body to preserve its manhood. To no avail, of course.

She fell back, coming to rest on the pillows of Alicia’s daybed. “I don’t believe this...” she muttered in a girlish voice, her pretty eyes staring at nothing. “I’ve got breasts—actual *breasts*?”

Alicia had to laugh. The moment when a newly minted girl discovered she has tits *had* to be the iconic moment in every transgen story she’d ever read. “It’s more than that,” she said. “By the time the magic gets through rewriting reality—oughta be any moment now—you and I will be the only peeps on planet Earth who will remember you were ever a dude.”

Megan sat up. “I don’t get this. The wig was *cursed*? How does that even happen? Did your boss know about it?” She looked dismayed. “Did *you* know?”

“Well, duh. Aggie’s the one who cursed it. She’s a witch—sort of.” She rolled her eyes. “Trouble is, all she can do is curse things like wigs so they turn guys into

girls. It's not all that useful, as you can imagine. She makes a decent living off the transgender crowd, but that's about all."

"But—I'm not transgender. Before this, I mean."

"Yeah, sorry about that. Aggie had the wig all ready for one of her clients, but I was unaware. You know how it is: old people never tell us stuff." She shook her head. "I'm not looking forward to explaining this to the dude. He's coming into the shop tomorrow, ya know, expecting to be turned into... well—you."

"Me?" Megan looked down at her body, then pointed at herself. "You mean *her*?"

Alicia nodded. "Mr. Gaunt went to a lot of effort to specify *exactly* who he wanted to be. Apparently, your new look is based on some girl he knew back when he was our age. It's the usual story: he was in love, she wasn't. Heck, she probably didn't know he existed. And she also died."

Megan buried her pretty face in her hands. "Oh my god. He's *so* gonna hate me."

"Hey, it's not *your* fault. Just a silly accident, is all."

"You think he's gonna see it that way? To him, I'm the one who got the body that was supposed to be his." She tugged on the hem of her skirt. "Gawd. He'd hate me even if I was forced into this body at gunpoint."

"Yeah, you may have a point."

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Jefferson Gaunt stared at Megan like he'd seen a ghost, which probably wasn't far from the truth. He was a tall man, too thin for his own good, pushing fifty with a fringe of gray hair clinging to his blotched scalp. He'd insisted on seeing her, even after Alicia's boss explained what happened and Alicia herself had apologized.

"An unfortunate accident," Agatha said. "I will, of course, prepare another wig for you immediately. It can be to the same specifications, or whatever else—"

"It's too late for that. She already exists." He stared at her with dead eyes. "I could report you for this. To the Witch Council. You could lose your licence."

Agatha wrung her hands. "Yes, I know... I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Gaunt. What can I do to make this right?"

Gaunt returned his gaze to the girl. He pursed his lips. "I have an idea." He drew Agatha aside and they conferred. Then Gaunt strode from the parlor.

Agatha threw both girls an icy glare. "Wait here. This shouldn't take long." She followed her client into the back of the store, where she kept her workshop. The door clicked shut behind her.

Alicia perched next to Megan, who was once more wearing the little black dress she'd tried on the day before. It seemed to suit her. "Cheer up, sis. We're in the clear. You heard the man: Aggie's the one who's in trouble."

Megan studied her beautifully manicured nails, which were tinted a delicate pink. She seemed to be in a trance. "Mom called last night," she said dully. "She wanted to know if I was still seeing Tommy."

"Yeah? What'd you tell her?"

"Well... I was about to tell her I had no idea who Tommy was—but then all of a sudden I *did*." She looked up, her eyes haunted. "He and I have been dating for six months. I remembered kissing him in the back seat of his Ford Fiesta. I even remembered—" She swallowed hard. "—going down on him."

"Awesome possum. Didn't you were that kind of girl."

"Don't—" A frustrated look crossed her face. "I didn't *do* any of those things. I remember doing them, but that's different."

Alicia shook her head. "This reality we're in is a whole new ball of wax. In this universe you *did* do those things, and you'll probably do 'em again." She smiled encouragingly. "Something to look forward to, huh?"

Megan stared glumly at the floor. Alicia stroked her sister's hair, noting how much longer it was than her own untidy pageboy. Their style of dress could hardly be more different either, with Alicia wearing her usual black hoodie, torn jeans and ratty sneakers. If there was a contest to determine who was the more effeminate, her former brother would win hands-down.

Half an hour passed before the door to the workshop yawed open. Agatha emerged and stood to one side. With a flourish she announced, "Girls, it is my distinct pleasure to present to you—your beloved aunt... Primrose Gaunt."

An elegantly dressed woman stepped into view. She was middle-aged, probably in her forties, but looked years younger. Long brunette hair sat coiled high atop her head, her makeup was immaculate, and she was wearing an off-the-shoulder lace dress that barely covered her knees—metallic green with an intricate pattern of leaves and flowers stitched in silver thread.

Alicia's jaw dropped. The woman was *gorgeous*! Was this the new and improved Jefferson Gaunt? Agatha might have limited spellcraft, but she was effing good at what she *could* do.

"In a few minutes," Agatha said, "the spell will finish rewriting reality. Primrose will officially be your mom's younger sister. She was married to the late Jefferson Gaunt." She turned to the widow Gaunt. "Is this is to your satisfaction?"

“It is indeed.” The woman’s voice flowed like a river of liquid honey; high, pure and sweet. “Megan, you’ll be pleased to know that I’ve arranged for you to come and live with me.”

Megan stiffened, like she’d been shot. Alicia said, “What do you mean by that: ‘arranged’? I know she lives at home, but she’s old enough to be on her own.”

Primrose ignored her. “Your parents were quite amenable to the idea. Your sister is obviously an utter write-off in this regard, but their thinking is that it’s not too late for *you* to learn how to conduct yourself as a proper lady.”

Alicia slung an arm across her sister’s shoulder. “Thanks ‘lady’, but my sister can make her own decisions—can’t you, sis?”

Primrose threw an icy glance toward Alicia, then went back to ignoring her. “Besides which,” she intoned, leveling a blood-red fingernail at the younger girl, “*you owe me*. The girl whose body you wear was meant to be the kind of elegant debutante her ‘nouveau riche’ parents could be proud of. Fate stole that destiny from her as surely as it stole *her* from the dearly departed Jefferson.” She glided across the room as though walking on air. “I intend to see to it that you become the woman she would have been. That is no less than what Jefferson planned to do himself, and it *is* what you will do in his stead.”

Alicia came to her feet. “No way! What if she doesn’t want to be some stuffy old lady? It’s not fair. Besides, it was all my fault.” She gulped. “Take *me* instead.”

“You? A girl who would dress like *that* is hardly a suitable replacement.”

Alicia sputtered. “You mean old bit—”

Megan was at her side, grabbing her arm. “Alicia! It’s okay. She has every right.” She faced her older sister. “Like you said, it was just a dumb accident. But I’m still the one wearing a body that doesn’t really belong to me.”

“So, what—you’re gonna go live with the old bat?”

Megan looked surprisingly calm. “I’m going to stay with Aunt Primrose and she’s going to teach me how to be a proper young lady. It’s the right thing to do.”

Primrose clucked approvingly. “Indeed, it’s a lovely way to honor my Anastasia’s memory.” She took Megan’s hand. “Come, dahling. We have much work to do. You’ll see your silly sister again... when you’re ready.”

Agatha watched them leave and then, hands behind her back, frowned at Alicia. “I’m sorry about your brother, but seriously—you shouldn’t have taken that wig. I’m going to have to dock you a week’s pay. That last spell was *expensive*.”

Alicia sighed. “Oh well... Marc’s probably better off. The way I figure it, any guy who can’t nail a girl by the time he’s twenty-one might as well *be* one.” ■
