



LISA CHANGE

The
Businessman
who Got
Trapped as a
Teenage Girl

(how one unhappy male
became a carefree school
girl - a transgender fantasy)

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One

It was a warm, summer day when the universe changed forever.

Outside the window, the city quietly baked in the heat. Art Deco skyscrapers built generations before reflected light down onto the brownstone streets below, adding to the sense that you simply could *not* escape the sun today.

By the mid-sized city's riverfront, office workers sat beneath the shade of trees, desperately trying to convince themselves that they were enjoying this heatwave.

Passing through the glass corridors of his office, Jason saw precisely none of this.

He was too busy trying to stop himself from simply collapsing from exhaustion.

"Morning, Jason!"

"Morning, Callie," Jason grunted back in a monotone, passing the pretty, dark skinned girl without even a glance.

Jesus, my feet... he thought dully to himself, *they feel like they're made of stone today...*

All around him, the life of the office continued, as it ever did, framed by the great glass windows and that view of the sweltering city.

They were a young company, one of the self-consciously hip start-ups that had mushroomed up across the city in the last fifteen years.

No matter how hard Jason looked as he passed the hot-desking spaces and florescent bean bags, he was pretty sure he'd never seen a person over 35.

It gave the company a good energy, a place where you could bond as well as work. Sure, it was still *work*, but at least people mostly seemed content.

From the outside, he fit in perfectly. If you'd asked the cute desk girl Callie what she thought of her line manager, she'd probably have said something like:

"Jason? Yeah, he's a nice guy. Weirdly handsome, in that boy next door sort of way. He seems like he's got it sorted, y'know?"

So why, then, did he feel this great emptiness inside of him?

A laugh cut through the funk surrounding Jason's brain. Someone telling a joke to a group of people.

He stopped on the fringes for a moment, smiling and nodding, trying to feel *part* of something, of this crowd.

But it was like there was a glass wall between him and these happy, shiny people. A cold, lifeless barrier through which only a distorted, broken echo of normal life could penetrate.

After ten seconds of forced laughter, Jason moved on.

What's up with me today...? It's like I can't focus, can't...

He brutally shoved the thoughts away.

Now wasn't the time to be stewing over that stuff. That's not what *real* men did.

"Amanda!"

At the sound of Jason's voice, a pretty, redheaded woman of about thirty glanced up from her desk, gave a knowing little smile.

"What's up, boss?"

Jason dropped his tired body down onto the edge of the desk with a sigh, summoned up a grin.

"Nothing that couldn't be fixed by seeing you."

Amanda raised a pencil thin eyebrow up at him.

"Careful, someone might tell Katherine you're flirting with the staff." A smirk. "She and Bryan could find up having an affair behind our backs."

God, Jason thought, even as he outwardly laughed, *if only...*

With her shoulder length, naturally-ginger hair, freckled cheeks and green eyes, and cute pixie face, Amanda was the star at the center of Jason's orbit, the person in the office he naturally gravitated towards, time and time again.

When he was alone with Katherine, it was Amanda whose smiling face appeared in his mind, Amanda whose pert breasts he imagined massaging, whose lips he imagined kissing.

But all it took was a quick glance down at her ring finger to know these dreams would never, ever come true.

"Speaking of Bryan, did he ever recover from that party?"

"Huh? Oh! Right, the office thing last month." Amanda leaned back in her chair, a secretive little gleam in her eyes. "Not that I want to embarrass him or anything, but he *may* have had to call in sick the next day. And someone else *may* have made his life hell by saying *I told you not to mix* roughly a billion times."

"Oh?"

Jason glanced around the office. At Callie, now joining the little group with their joke he'd tried and failed to be a part of.

Suddenly he no longer wanted to be here, listening to the woman he wanted talking about the man who'd gotten to her first.

"Boss? Oh God, am I *that* boring already?"

"Huh?"

Amanda rolled her eyes theatrically.

"I *said*, what about Katherine? How's she doing?"

"Right. Yeah, she's fine. I guess."

Across the room, Callie was telling her own joke now. A part of Jason wondered why he didn't go over there and talk to her. Why he didn't try and spend more time with her, rather than gravitating towards Amanda's desk every morning, like a moth flitting toward a flame.

Callie was nice. Pretty. She clearly *liked* him.

Just as important, she was single. Sure, she had a kid from her last marriage, but still...

Maybe with a woman like that, he could do it. Maybe he could get the balls to leave Katherine, forget Amanda. Be a goddamn *man*.

The thought almost made him give a bitter laugh.

Yeah. Like *that* was ever gonna happen.

Sat below him, Amanda watched her boss closely, a vague sense of unease in her heart.

She could see all too clearly the bags under his eyes. The way his fingernails were worn down from chewing. The distracted twitch of his cheek that always showed up when something was eating him.

Oh Jason, she sighed to herself. Dude, what's eating you this time...?

Outwardly, she summoned up her brightest smile, gave him a quick slap on the thigh. Jason started and blinked down at her.

"Hey, I've got an idea. Tonight. You, me, cocktails and chat, like old times." She gave him an encouraging look. "There's this new place down by the river. They say it's *magical*."

"Tonight?" Jason shook his head slightly. "Don't you... I mean, won't Bryan...?"

Amanda burst out laughing.

"Christ, Jason! We're not all miserable like you!" She leaned back on her chair, raised her eyebrows. "C'mon. Riverfront. Five O'clock. What say you?"

For a second, she was sure Jason was going to come up with an excuse. Saw him starting to shake his head, starting to say no.

Here it comes, she thought.

But then her old friend stopped. Gave a tiny sigh.

"Sure. Why not?"

"Great! Five, right? Don't leave me hanging!"

"Wouldn't dream of it."

As Jason slipped off Amanda's desk, headed off with a smile, the married woman quietly shook her head to herself.

Oh man has he got it bad, Amanda thought as she turned back to her computer, wouldn't stop looking at Callie the whole time.

No wonder he's all worked up.

At the same time, Jason carried on towards his desk, a dim pulse of thought beating in his temples.

Why do you do this to yourself? Why torture yourself by spending time with her?

No wonder you're miserable.

Around him, the rest of the office talked and laughed and got on with their work like normal. None of them even seemed to realize that there was a drowning man in their midst.

*

“What did I tell you? *Magical.*”

“I guess...?”

“Go on, say it.”

Jason glanced at the bare lightbulbs strung from the trees. At the couples jogging alongside the river. The sunset reflecting off the skyscrapers over the water. He sighed.

“OK, fine.” He put on a singsong voice. “You were right, I was wrong. This place is *the shit.*”

Amanda gave a laugh, tossed her hair back. She didn’t realize it, but she looked so perfect in that moment that Jason nearly started crying.

It was evening. They were sat in the outside seating area of the new bar at the riverside development, just where the water was at its widest and the city center seemed furthest away.

The air was still thick with heat, but less so than it had been just three hours earlier. Now, with people emerging from their offices and coming to unwind by the embankment, it almost felt like a midsummer’s night.

Who knows, Jason wondered, taking a sip of his martini, *maybe my dreams will come true.*

Across the table from him – touching distance, but lightyears away – Amanda looked around with a serene smile.

“You know, my mom used to come here when she was a kid? Like, obviously not *here* here, but to this spot, when it was all woods. Know what she used to say?”

Jason shrugged.

Amanda raised her straw to her lips, gave Jason a secretive look.

“She used to say that fairies lived here, just like back in Ireland.”

“I thought Ireland was leprechauns?”

“Oh *wow*, stereotype much? There’s gotta be some Title 9 stuff I can sue your ass under for that.”

Jason gave a small smile, his first real smile all day. For a moment, there was silence between the two, broken only by the faint hubbub of conversation around them.

At long last, Amanda cleared her throat.

“So, I couldn’t help noticing today...”

Jason’s fingers clenched around his glass. He subconsciously grit his teeth.

“...that you kinda look like *shit.*”

“Oh.” Jason felt his body untense. “Oh, right. I thought you meant...”

That you’d realized I want to fuck you...

“...something else.”

Amanda pushed her drink aside, leaned on the table with both arms.

“Seriously, Jason, what’s eating you? You’ve been looking like you’re being haunted by Banquo’s ghost for *months*.”

Jason frowned.

“Who is...?”

Amanda shook her head, her ginger hair shining in the fading sunlight.

“Literally not important.” A pause. “C’mon, dude. I know we don’t talk like we used to, but it feels like you’re gonna explode if you don’t...”

“It’s nothing.” Jason gently pushed his glass away from him. He was already on his second and his mind felt a little fogged. “It’s just...”

He hesitated. But the sight of Amanda, hanging on his every word was just too much.

“It’s just, do you ever think about how we’re getting older?”

Amanda snorted.

“Every goddamn day. But so what? I’m thirty, I like thirty, it’s cool. What are you? Twenty...?”

“Twenty eight.” Jason glanced away from her, over at the river. “It’s not... it’s not the *number* though.”

“Then what is it?”

“Life.”

When Amanda didn’t respond, he went on.

“Back in college, I used to have a plan. Graduate at twenty one, hit the ground running. Find the right girl. Be successful by twenty five. Married by twenty seven.”

“And now you’re a line manager in a decent company with a girlfriend.” Amanda spread her arms wide. “Jason, you’re actually...”

“But I’m not, am I?”

Jason gave the girl of his dreams a quick look, but he was too nervous to hold her gaze and instead looked down at his fingernails, pretended to examine them.

“You don’t get it. I was meant to be on Wall Street by now. Or making an app. Or writing a novel, I don’t know. Instead...”

He sighed.

“Instead, here I am. About to turn thirty. A nobody, a no-one who will never be a someone.”

“What about Katherine?”

“Katherine? Yeah, I mean, she’s all right...”

But she’s not the *one*, y’know? The one I dreamed of when I was younger.”

You are, he wanted to say, but didn’t.

Jesus Callie, Amanda thought as she watched her boss's face, *can you not see what you're doing to this poor guy?*

"I sometimes just wish," Jason went on, after a pause, "that I was young again. That I could have those good times back. Maybe I'd do things differently.

Maybe I could be the person I wanted to be."

At Jason's words, there was a rustling in the tree above him, a shuffling of leaves that could have been an animal. Neither he nor Amanda paid it any mind.

But it wasn't an animal. Wasn't the wind.

Directly above the two colleagues, in the canopy of the last ancient tree the developers hadn't cleared from the waterfront, a fairy perched on a branch and listened to Jason's story with her tiny mouth dangling open.

The fairy didn't have a name – no fairies ever do – but she had a story of her own, a set of memories she had come back to hold one last time.

They were memories unlike anything humans might recognize. A series of impressions that formed a collage in her head, a sense of movement like the steps of some unknown dance.

She could remember the days when all the land here was trees. The days when the city was young and fairies still played here, across the river from the humans' tall buildings.

She could remember, too, the human children that sometimes visited this little fairy kingdom. The boys and girls (she could never remember which was which) that watched them flitting through the branches with a mixture of fear and awe.

They had been good times, the fairy knew. Times of unfocused happiness that seemed like they would never end.

But of course they had. Those strange, roaring machines had come, and before the fairies could even concentrate their magic to fight back, all the trees had gone, replaced with human buildings.

All except this one.

The fairies had all fled. All except her. She'd stayed on, mourning the loss of her past, of that happy, blissful time.

She'd watched the humans arrive and looked at them and wondered if they were capable of feeling loss like fairies were. If they understood how it felt to lose something that felt so dear to you.

She'd still been wondering this when the two humans had sat below her and started talking.

Now here she was, fifteen minutes later, feeling like she could start crying.

She hadn't been able to understand all the bigger human had said (she knew there was a male and female sat below, but she couldn't for the life of her tell them apart). But it hadn't mattered. She'd understood the most important thing.

This one, single human in all the world felt as lost and hopeless as she did.

"You know I'd give anything for a do-over?" The human's voice floated up to her, as loaded

with sadness as she felt. “Give up my job, give up Katherine, give up everything.”

A Katherine? The fairy frowned. Were they those big, furry things with four legs humans seemed to like so much? If this human was willing to give up its Katherine, things *must* be bad!

She decided to creep a little lower.

With a deft flick of her wings, the fairy dropped until she was as close to the humans as she dared get. A bird came hopping over to see if she was food, but she waved her tiny wand and turned it into a worm.

There, that was close enough.

The bigger human was still talking about strange, human things. But the loss was there in its voice, louder than ever. A feeling of tragedy that eclipsed everything else.

Deep in her inhuman heart, the fairy felt a twinge of sorrow.

It would be so easy... so easy to wave her wand and fix this human’s life. Then it wouldn’t have to give up its Katherine and could be happy!

But no. It was forbidden to meddle in human affairs. Gone were the days when you could turn humans to stone, or lead them to pots of gold, the Council of Fairies had seen to that.

But where was the Council now? Gone, like everything else. Like soon all fairies would be gone from this place.

With her breath held, the fairy unsheathed her wand from its holster, pointed it down at the bigger human.

Just this once... she thought, a thrill of disobedience passing through her, *just this once, I’ll grant a wish.*

If I can’t make our past come back, then maybe I can make it come back for one lonely human.

Then she closed her eyes, and cast her spell.

Sat beneath the tree, Jason suddenly stopped talking. Frowned upwards. Amanda blinked.

“What?”

“Nothing. I just thought I...”

Jason trailed off, uneasy. He couldn’t tell the woman of his dreams *I thought I heard a tinkling sound and saw stars twinkling around me.*

Then Amanda really *would* think he was cracking up.

“It’s nothing. Just a dream, I guess.”

He quickly knocked back the last of his martini, nodded down at Amanda’s empty glass.

“Want me to get the next one? We can talk about something happier.”

Neither of the two humans sat by the riverfront noticed the tree rustle again. Neither of them heard the faint giggle ring out.

Nobody at the bar that warm summer evening knew it, but the universe had just changed forever.

Two

The first thing Jason was aware of when he woke up was just how damn hungover he was.

It was like there was an actual, living creature inside his head, one that wanted nothing more than to grab his brain, twist it between its fingertips, and leave him feeling like he'd drunk a pint of liquid death last night.

With an almighty groan, Jason swiped his alarm to snooze then dropped back with one arm draped over his eyes.

I feel like shit...

For a moment, he wondered – with a mix of trepidation and hope – if he'd done anything stupid last night.

Images appeared in his mind, of Amanda looking confused as he tried to kiss her. Stepping back... but then smiling and letting him wrap his arms around her waist. Smiling up at him from under her bangs as he pulled her closer, closer...

The image shattered and fell apart. Of course he hadn't done anything as damn stupid as that.

Even when he'd drank like a fish, he still couldn't be brave.

Jason's stomach lurched a little. He guessed he should get breakfast, crunch some caffeine tablets before work.

But not without finishing off his fantasy first.

Sleepily, Jason slipped a hand inside his pants. Felt his rod, as thick as iron.

He tugged it a few times, dully imagining Amanda letting her dress fall to the ground, letting him unhook her bra and fondle her breasts. Holding herself tight against his masculine body and whispering how *good* he was.

It took longer than usual, like his hungover brain wasn't as into his regular fantasy today. But, eventually, Jason came with a soft grunt, letting his seed squirt inside his underpants, just like when he was a teenager.

For a moment he lay there in his own sticky mess, wondering what the fuck was wrong with him, but then his stomach lurched again and he was on his feet, pulling off his underpants and then staggering naked into the living room.

His apartment was neat, as it always was. As boring and neat as the rest of his life.

Jason wrenched the curtains open, hoping for a dazzling blast of sun that would sear across his brain and burn the hangover away, but the heatwave had broke in the night and now it was all damp and drizzly.

What's that word for when the weather matches your mood? Empathy something...?

He thought about Googling it – anything to take his mind off this sick feeling – but he realized that would probably mean seeing Katherine's messages from last night. Asking if he was coming to hers after all. Where the fuck he was, and so on.

So he simply flipped the coffee maker on and staggered into the bathroom, not sure if he was going to urinate, be sick, or just drown himself, and feeling like all three sounded about equally appealing.

That all changed the moment he snapped on the light over the mirror.

At first, his waking mind didn't register what had made his subconscious stop dead in its tracks. All he could see was his regular reflection, squinting back at him through bloodshot eyes.

But then the rest of his mind caught up and Jason felt his hangover fall away like a wedding veil dropping quietly to the floor.

His reflection had *changed*.

Not by much. By so little, in fact, that he was certain he was imagining it at first.

But no. Subtle as it was, the difference was undeniable.

The hairs on his forehead were *slightly* thicker around his temples, as if his receding hairline hadn't just paused overnight but slowly started creeping forward again.

At the edges of his eyes, the new wrinkles that had started to form in the last couple of years when he smiled were ever so slightly fainter.

Speaking of smiling, he couldn't be sure, but it looked like his gums, too, were a fraction healthier. His teeth a fraction whiter.

His eyes, too had something... *different* about them. A tiny, almost imperceptible spark Jason hadn't seen for a while now.

A spark of youth.

For a long time, Jason stared at his reflection, trying to figure out the trick, to see the wires that allowed whatever magician had created this mirror to fool him into believing he was...

Well, he didn't even want to think about it.

Your hands... a voice whispered in the back of Jason's mind. *Check your hands. They always say the hands are where the first signs of aging turn up.*

Hesitantly, not wanting to look away from the mirror in case the changes vanished, Jason raised his hands. Glanced at their backs.

At first, he thought he must've been mistaken. They were the same as ever, with the same dark hairs dusting the backs of his fingers, the same tiny mole near one thumb joint.

But then he felt his eyes go wide and realized the world really *had* gone mad.

The skin of his hands was softer. Tauter. Just fractionally less wrinkled, as if he'd stepped in a time reversal machine and stepped out maybe less than a year younger.

It was almost imperceptible.

It was also real.

Somehow, against all the laws of nature, Jason was getting *younger*.

My wish... the words drummed on the inside of Jason's skull, *my wish. It...*

It came true.

No. It was impossible. Bullshit.

Wishes weren't *real*. And, if they were, they didn't come true when you casually made them over cocktails. What the hell sort of a system would *that* be?

But then how did he explain everything he was seeing?

There was a distant gurgle of liquid. The coffee maker, finally delivering its first precious cup, welcoming him back to life, back to reality.

Only this wasn't any reality Jason was used to.

As the unhappy man stared at his reflection, listening to the noise of the coffee maker, a strange smile began to cross his face. A strange sensation to rise up in his chest, making him want to laugh out loud, to throw his arms around his chest and give himself the *biggest* hug.

The universe had listened. It'd given him what he'd asked for.

He, Jason, was going to be *young* again.

*

"Wow, Jason! You're looking good this morning!"

"You're looking even better, Callie," Jason grinned, leaning over the front of her desk, "like always."

He dropped her a quick wink, vaguely hoping it wouldn't come across as creepy.

To his relief, Callie giggled, holding the back of one dark hand against her lips.

"Oh my God, that was so...!"

"So what?"

"So *cheesy!*" She laughed, before quickly putting her hand onto Jason's arm. "I'm sorry, I know you're in a good mood, I just..."

"Sorry? Don't be." Jason grinned at her. "You know how I feel? Like I just got promoted, married, and won the lottery. I don't think even you could bring me down."

"Don't tempt me," Callie smiled. "I might try."

Why don't I fancy her more? Jason thought as he strolled through the office. *She's like the one person who might say yes in this office if I asked her out...*

Hey, maybe I should just ask her out anyway. She might wind up growing on me.

The thought gave him a weird spring in his step as he made his way over to Amanda's desk.

"Hey, Amanda. Amanda!"

Already, he could see the trillion odd windows open on her computer, the adorable way she was chewing her lower lip, like she did when she was stressed. Already he could see it wasn't a good time.

But hell, he had to share it with someone.

“Guess what?!”

“Oh, hey Jason.” Amanda didn’t even raise her eyes from the screen. “Kinda amazed you made it in, after all those...”

Jason didn’t even let her finish.

“My wish. It came true. I know it sounds *nuts*, but...”

“Your *what?*”

“My wish! Remember, last night, when we were under the tree?” He gave her an impatient look. “I wished...”

“Did you?” Amanda clicked on something, sighed. “Dude, the accounts this month are actually *killing* me.”

“Amanda, listen to me. This is important. My wish, remember? To be younger. Well, *look.*”

He leaned forward, pointed at his hairline.

“It’s growing back.”

“God damnit,” Amanda growled at the screen. She turned, gave Jason’s forehead a polite look.

“See?”

“I dunno, Jason. Sure? I mean, I guess. No you *idiot*, that’s the wrong attachment! Arrgh!”

She grabbed the phone, gave Jason an apologetic look.

“Sorry, boss, gotta chew out some dumbass in HR. Glad those drinks perked you up.”

“But...” Jason started to say.

But it was too late. Amanda was on the phone, a well-chewed pencil held up to her mouth, as it always was when she got super pissed at someone.

For a moment longer, Jason stood there, wanting to shout *Hello? My wish – my actual wish – is coming true! Isn’t that more important than some HR dipshit?*

But, in the end, he gave Amanda one last smile, then turned and headed towards his distant office.

Weird, he thought as he went, *it’s almost like she can’t remember me making that wish...*

Ah, well. It wasn’t like he could stay mad at Amanda, anyway.

Running a hand through his slowly thickening hairline, Jason summoned a big grin onto his face.

He could already tell today was gonna be *excellent*.

*

That night, Jason stood naked before his bathroom mirror again, examining himself.

It had been just like he’d predicted at work. He’d spent the whole day floating on an invisible bubble of positivity, radiating good energy like a portrait of some smiling Buddha (albeit less fat, he hastened to add).

He’d even messaged Katherine, asking her to come around his on the weekend. He didn’t know

whether he was going to dump or fuck her, and it hardly mattered.

Because there had been even *more* changes in the day.

By now, it was clear that his wrinkles were fading. Not yet in a way anyone else might notice, but very visible to eyes that examined this face in minute detail each and every day.

His stubble, too, was getting softer, less wiry. In a way, that was less attractive, but still, he hadn't been able to grow a proper beard until he was 25, so it was at least in keeping with the other changes.

His teeth had changed subtly, too. Become ever so slightly smaller, slightly more even.

He assumed it must be his wisdom teeth, shrinking away as his age reversed.

"It's really true, isn't it?" Jason said out loud to his empty bathroom. "We really *are* getting younger."

There was no answer, of course. Still, that didn't stop Jason from clapping his hands and letting out a light little laugh as he watched his reflection changing.

If you'd told him at that exact moment what was really happening he would have refused to believe you.

*

Three days later, Jason was stood in front of the bathroom mirror again, examining his reflection.

But this time, there was no smile on his face. No feeling of joy swelling up in his chest.

There was just a *very* puzzled frown.

The last few days had been a whirlwind of strangeness.

Every morning, Jason had leapt out of bed and run to the bathroom, his heart hammering in his chest.

Every morning, he'd noticed he'd changed a little more. Become more youthful looking.

At work, he'd felt like his heart was bursting.

He had more energy, more desire to *do* stuff.

At the risk of neglecting his job, he'd spent the last few days flitting between desks, chatting to colleagues, joking with them, ribbing them.

Now when groups of people gathered to laugh at a joke, it was usually Jason who was in the center, reveling in his new, youthful energy.

He'd expected people to ask questions. To comment on his newfound lease of life. At the very least, he thought, they must have assumed he'd proposed to Katherine or something.

But no-one had said anything. More than that, they hadn't even appeared to notice.

It was like the last few months of Jason's misery and depression had been scrubbed from everyone's minds.

Even Amanda seemed more... distant, somehow.

On the second day of his age reversal, he'd casually asked her if she thought he seemed more

alive now.

“I dunno, *maybe?*” She’d responded, not taking her eyes off her computer. “Jeez, this is killing me. I’ve gotta present the figures to the head guys later, and I just...”

She’d waved one arm at him.

“Go on: shoo! This is serious, grownup stuff.”

As Jason had walked away, he’d felt a strange unease gnawing at his stomach.

Wait, isn’t presenting the figures meant to be my job...?

But, by and large, it had been a positive week.

He’d even seen Katherine just last night. They’d fucked for what felt like ages over the kitchen counter, Jason drilling into his girlfriend from behind while she gasped and wailed and writhed on his cock.

(Although even that had been different, somehow. While Jason could still get hard, it was like he was suddenly finding it difficult to come. There was something about the sight of a... a *woman* in the throes of passion that didn’t seem to do much for him. It was only by closing his eyes and summoning images of a porno he’d watched recently that he’d been able to finish).

But, if the last few days had been strangely positive, today was simply strange.

He’d woken up late that morning, and gone to work with only the quickest glance in the mirror, to make sure the changes were still coming.

Now it was evening, and he was examining his wish-altered body for the first time in 24 hours.

Jason wasn’t at all sure he liked what he saw.

Slowly, like a man moving through water, he prodded at the flesh surrounding his nipples. Frowned. There was no longer any doubting it.

His chest was getting *bigger*.

It was subtle, as everything else was. A slight build up of fatty tissue. A vague feeling of softness where he’d once had semi-decent pecs.

But it was worrying all the same.

I can’t be getting fat, can I? Jason wondered, uneasily. *I mean, when I was younger, I was never...*

No, he’d always kept in relatively good shape. Like, he’d never been mistaken for Chris Hemsworth or anything, but he’d always been pretty trim.

This latest development was deeply troubling.

Jason let go of his chest, looked at his nipples, wondering if it was his imagination, or if they were really getting longer.

He dropped his hands down to his waist, and felt the shape of his hips. That troubled look returned to his reflection.

His hips, too, seemed to be larger. Again, not by much, but they had a sort of... *swell* to them

that definitely hadn't been there before.

Come to think of it, his hair, too, seemed to be getting a little *too* long.

Like, it was great that it was returning, obviously. But still...

It was starting to get a little long around the back. A little unprofessional, sort of like the length of hair men wore back in the 70s.

It could be the light, but he thought it might be changing color, too. Going from black to chestnut, slowly lightening when his back was turned.

Is this one of those careful what you wish for deals? Jason thought, uneasily. *Like, I'm going to be young again, but fat and with a stupid haircut?*

He didn't think wishes really worked like that, but then, he didn't think wishes were real until three days ago, so...

With a little shake, Jason pulled his t-shirt back on, went into the living room and grabbed his phone.

"Hey, what is it?"

"Hey Amanda, sorry to call you..." Jason checked the time, *"oh shit, really sorry to call so late! Its just I-I need to ask you something."*

"Seriously, can't this wait?" Amanda's voice was slurred with sleep, *"I've got a ball ache of a day tomorrow..."*

"I know, I'm sorry, but..." Jason scratched the back of his head, hesitated. *"Do you think I'm changing?"*

There was a long pause on the other end of the line. Jason could picture Amanda, her red hair all mussed, clad in only a loose nightshirt, the dark points of her nipples clearly visible through the fabric.

For some reason, the image didn't excite him as much as he expected it to.

"I think..." the voice said at last, *"that you're changing into a massive pain in my ass. Jessie... sweetie... it's just too damn late for this. Go to bed, huh? I'll see you in the office."*

The line went dead, leaving Jason looking helplessly at his phone.

Jessie...? He wondered. *That's not my name. It's not even short for...*

His face suddenly went blank. A strange feeling of panic gripped his chest.

Short for what? Short for... for...?

There was the briefest impression of stars, twinkling around his head. The cursed man gave a little shake of his head, laughed to himself.

What the hell are you talking about, dummy? Jessie is your name. Y'know, like Aaron Todd's character in Breaking Bad.

Jessie smiled, nervously. Sure, that was it. Jessie. His name. It always had been.

But he couldn't help noticing that the strange feeling of unease didn't dissipate as he'd hoped it

would.

That night, Jessie's sleep was interrupted by uneasy dreams.

He dreamed he was walking alongside the riverfront, where the new development had taken place.

Only it was *different*, somehow. The buildings on this side of the river were gone, replaced by ancient, gnarled oak trees with branches that seemed to shiver as he walked by, faint giggles on the air.

He was aware that a figure was walking alongside him. Someone taller than him who was holding his hand, tenderly, kindly, keeping him close.

Katherine? He tried to say, but his mouth wouldn't open. *Amanda?*

He tried to turn to face the stranger walking with him, but his neck wouldn't move. He realized he couldn't stop walking. Couldn't do anything but keep passing through this magical woodland, a strange feeling of calm in his chest.

The figure next to him was talking. It was that weird way people sometimes talk in dreams, when you know they're saying something, but no words actually come from their mouths.

But Jessie could still sense the way they spoke, the timber of their voice, deep and rich.

That's a guy, he realized, *another man. Holding my hand. But... but then why...*

Suddenly, the hand holding his gripped tight, making Jessie squeak. He tried to fight, to pull away, terrified the dream was about to turn into a nightmare...

But instead something far stranger happened.

The figure pulled his arm, swung him around so he was facing it. Jessie just had time to get a glimpse of a male form, of a strong, attractive man smiling down at him...

And then his eyes closed and he and the strange man were kissing.

They kissed for what felt like eternity, Jessie's trembling lips locked against the strong man's, as he held Jessie tight against him, kissing him, drinking him in.

Jessie gamely tried to fight, but his body refused.

It was like it knew what he wanted, even if he didn't. Knew his dark secret: that this kiss was the greatest kiss he'd experienced in his life, that he could just die happy here, in this strong man's arms while those unseen voices giggled around him, getting louder... louder...

Jessie woke up with a gasp in the cold morning light, his body covered with sweat. A throbbing in his pants signaled a rock hard erection that made him feel like crying.

It was just after 4am and the weak blue of dawn was just starting to fill the bedroom, heralding another day, another change.

What's happening to me? Jessie thought, miserably, curling up into a ball and staring into the fading darkness with unhappy eyes – eyes that were looking younger by the day. *What the hell is happening...?*

He spent the rest of the night sat there, shivering, terrified of going back to sleep.

Three

By the time a week had passed, Jessie knew he was in deep trouble.

The four days after his strange dream had been marked by an escalating weirdness that had left him sick with worry.

The same day he'd woken up at 4am, he'd tried to call Katherine, only to find her number had vanished from his phone.

He'd searched frantically online for any trace of her, but she'd disappeared from his LinkedIn contacts, from his Instagram followers, from everywhere.

At last, he'd just decided to search her on Facebook, typing in KATHERINE WHITE with shaking fingertips.

It was then that he'd got his first really nasty shock.

She'd been there. Of course she had. But so had at least three other Katherine Whites living in the area.

As Jessie had stared at the four women's faces smiling out of their profile pictures, a sensation of dread had settled over him.

He couldn't tell which was his Katherine.

The four women all looked completely different. One was even black, so Jessie thought he could probably discount her. But the others...

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't for the life of him remember which one was the woman he'd been seeing these last two years.

It was like Katherine had just been some character in a film he watched as a teenager, or a woman glimpsed in a distant dream, now half forgotten.

A cold shiver running down his spine, Jessie had closed his eyes and tried to remember the last time they had sex together, hoping at least to remember her body, her smell.

But nothing had come. Just images of his dream, of kissing that strange man again.

Work had been even weirder.

Although everyone still seemed pleased to see him, eager to listen to his jokes, they no longer seemed to *respect* him, somehow.

Even though Jessie was their boss, he found his colleagues were starting to ignore him or wave him away when they were busy, like he was a distraction.

He even found himself getting coffee for people, handing over the steaming cups with a great, big smile, like he was trying to *impress* people three whole pay grades below him.

At the same time, people seemed to be deferring more to Amanda, like she was suddenly the one in charge, like *she* was the boss.

Do you do this to me, Amanda? Jessie had found himself thinking one day as he put a mug of tea on her desk, earning himself a quick, professional smile. *Did you curse me so you could take my*

job?

But he was no longer so sure Amanda *had* taken his job.

In fact, he was finding it hard to remember what it had been like to be the boss, to give orders.

There was a rather large part of him that thought maybe he'd always been the one doing silly little tasks for the grownups.

At the same time as all this, the physical changes had kept on coming.

While there was no doubt that Jessie was now looking *much* younger than he had a week ago, it wasn't only newfound youth his body was having to deal with.

He was shorter, for one thing. From 6'2", he'd dropped to about 5'9" and was sure he was still shrinking.

His hair was now almost shoulder length, and still stubbornly growing, even as it became completely chestnut in color.

(He'd tried to chop it off one evening, but no sooner had he found the scissors than his mind suddenly went blank and he couldn't remember why he'd wanted them in the first place).

His hips were bigger, too, now noticeably so. As they grew, his ass was getting more prominent, starting to stick out more.

The fat was still collecting around his chest, making his pecs all soft and wobbly. But it didn't seem to be collecting in the same way around his stomach.

Jessie tried not to think too hard about what *that* might mean.

Then there was his face.

Over the course of the week, Jessie's features had softened, lost their masculine definition.

His jawline had become less prominent. His eyes a little bigger. His mouth a little wider. His nose a little smaller.

Taken one by one, the changes were still slight enough to not be a problem. But when examined all at once...

It was adding up to something Jessie wasn't at all sure he liked.

Now, when he went to the bathroom mirror each morning, it was with a feeling of trepidation, of fear at what he might see happening next.

As he looked into his reflection's face one evening – a face that now looked soft and androgynous, if still recognizably *him* – he felt a shard of ice penetrate his heart.

He could no longer really recall what he was meant to look like.

All he knew was that it wasn't like *this*.

Yet, despite all this, Jessie felt like he was just about managing to hang on to life, to not go completely mad.

Until the seventh day.

That morning, Jessie awoke late for work. Rather than running for the bathroom mirror, he

simply started pulling his clothes on, all while still running the last crazy week back and forth through his head.

With a start, he realized the evening he'd made the wish had almost totally faded from his memory.

All that was left was a faint impression of a place near water, and wondering if he should try and kiss Amanda.

(Why did I think that? He wondered as he pulled his pants on. It's not like I'm gay...)

It wasn't until he was fully dressed and about to leave for work that Jessie caught sight of himself reflected in the apartment window and felt his heart stop.

Somehow, his clothes were *different*.

The changes were small, in their own way, just like his body. So subtle he must've failed to notice them over the previous week.

But now, after seven days...

What. Jessie thought in horror. Is. HAPPENING to me?!

The smart jeans he usually wore were no longer regular fit men's jeans. They'd become *tighter*, clinging to his figure, accentuating the shape of his gently swelling hips and ass.

The waistband, too, was now higher. No longer settled around his hips, but pulled up to his stomach, with the effect that it made his waist seem tighter.

What had once been a smart red t-shirt with a retro *All Your Base Are Belong to Us* slogan to wear beneath his smart blazer was now starting to look suspiciously like a tank top.

A tank top with a weirdly low neckline.

As he stared at the clothes he was wearing, Jessie tried to remember if maybe Katherine (whoever she was) had left some of her clothes around his when she last stayed. Clothes he'd put on by accident. Clothes that were unisex but leaned female.

No sooner had the thought formed in his head than Jessie knew it was bullshit.

Trembling, the cursed man staggered back into his bedroom. Threw open his closet, started frantically digging through.

Less than 90 seconds had passed when he let out his first scream.

All of his clothes had changed, or were changing, reforming themselves as slowly, as inexorably as his body.

His jeans were all skinny now, mostly with trendy little rips and holes down the front, so tight they looked like you'd have to fight to get into them.

His casual t-shirts were all changing shape, becoming tank tops of various sizes. The two smart shirts he kept for meeting clients now looked more like blouses.

His underpants had all shrank, become flimsier, taking on the appearance of panties. His socks were all becoming either tiny, flimsy ankle socks, or growing longer and turning into stockings.

Finally, at the back, Jessie found something that almost made him burst into hysterical laughter.

Neatly stacked at the very rear of his closet, a set of seven bras were slowly pulling themselves into existence, knitting together out of nothing, their cups already half-formed.

Quietly, Jessie picked one up. Felt it in his hands. How *real* it was.

He sat down slowly on the edge of his bed. Looked at what he was wearing. Of how his body was changing.

There was no longer any denying it. No longer any need to pretend the obvious wasn't happening.

Somehow, against all the laws of God and nature...

...Jessie was *turning into a woman*.

The thought was so ridiculous he almost laughed out loud. Men didn't just turn into women! It was impossible. *Absurd!*

But then he saw the gently budding breasts now growing from his chest. The way his waist was tighter, the way he dressed with a slip of stomach on display.

The way his arms and legs were becoming more slender, losing their masculine hairs.

Slowly, Jessie raised his hands up before his face. Examined his fingers, the way they were getting slender. The way his wrists were shrinking.

With a loud wail he threw himself back on his bed, clutched his lengthening hair.

It can't be true! I'm a man, damnit! A man!

And he still was. If you'd been unaffected by the magic and able to give an objective assessment of Jessie at that moment, you'd have said he was at least sixty five percent male.

The only trouble was that percentage was shrinking by the second.

As Jessie lay there, his mind in turmoil, all thoughts of going to work slipped from his mind.

If... if this is really happening, then there's only one thing I can do...

He looked at the discarded, half-formed bra lying next to him. Felt a strange desire inside himself to put it on and shuddered.

"I've got to get back to the river and wish myself back to normal," he whispered out loud.

*

"Where to, miss?"

"The riverfront. Please. And..." A hesitation. "It's, uh, not *miss*."

"No? Lemme..."

A pair of eyes, staring at him, suddenly getting wider.

"Whoops! Sorry young man, my mistake, ha ha. No offense, s'not easy being my age when you kids are all dressing like that and young boys are wearing makeup..."

Jessie gently closed his eyes. Tried to control his breathing.

"It's fine. Just please... just drive."

“Suit yourself, boy. Just don’t be upset or nothing, honest mistake!”

In the darkness behind his eyes, Jessie heard the motor start, felt the taxi swing out into the road, start moving across the city.

He kept his eyelids shut, like he was hiding in the soft, fuzzy brown darkness. Hiding from reality. Hiding from the horrible thing that was happening to him.

Hiding from the fact he was slowly *becoming female*.

The wish had progressed further than he’d thought.

After deciding to skip work and go racing back to undo his wish, Jessie had tried to just jump up and leave the house.

But it had been impossible. No sooner had he got to the door than his mind fogged over and, when it cleared, he was stood before the bathroom mirror gingerly applying eyeliner.

It was like some deep, elemental part of himself was suddenly terrified of leaving the apartment without at least some foundation and mascara.

As his body did its basic makeup of its own accord, Jessie had gazed sadly at his reflection.

With the makeup and his transforming clothes and body, he no longer looked like a grown man.

He looked like a boy of about 19 or 20 who was dressing like a girl for his own amusement.

Or maybe like a girl of the same age who was trying to play into her androgynous, slightly masculine features by cutting her hair short-ish and acting like a boy.

Either way, the thought of going out like this *terrified* him.

I’ll get laughed at. Heckled. Maybe cat called. Maybe even beaten up... Jessie thought unhappily as he blended his foundation around the neck, almost like he’d been doing this his whole life. *I look ridiculous.*

But, try as he might, he could no longer remember looking any other way.

It was like a curtain had fallen across his mind, like the wish was pulling apart his past even as it was reshaping his future.

Incredibly, though, no-one else had seemed to notice.

Oh sure, he got a couple of odd looks as he left his apartment block. But they were the curious looks of people who are wondering if they’ve seen this boy/girl around before, not the stares and laughter Jessie thought his appearance deserved.

By the time he got in the taxi, he was no longer sure if he was the one going mad, or if the world was.

It’s the wish... he thought. *It’s affecting everyone, not just you. The entire world is changing...*

But there was a growing part of him that didn’t really believe it. That felt there wasn’t anything wrong. That thought this whole “wish” thing was a stupid fantasy he’d made up.

You’ve always looked like this, haven’t you? Part of his mind whispered. Why do you need to keep playing these stupid games, pretending you’re different...

By the time the taxi pulled up at the riverfront, Jessie had completely forgotten his fears and unease, and instead become completely absorbed in looking at teen models on Instagram, searching for new clothing ideas.

It wasn't until the cab driver spoke that he even remembered what he was meant to be doing.

"Here you are, miss. Sorry, boy."

"Thanks," Jessie muttered, slipping out the door without waiting for his change.

Here he was indeed.

The riverfront development looked alien to his changing eyes, like it had grown up overnight or something, like there should only be trees and ancient forest here.

As Jessie walked awkwardly past bars and restaurants that were only just opening up for the day, he became aware of a strange feeling, like he didn't belong here.

Like he was far, far too young to be hanging around a place people mainly came to get drunk.

Had you seen the confused young man at that moment and known his history, you would have noted that he was even starting to walk in a feminine way – not the confident walk of a woman, but the shy movements of a much younger girl, out of her element and unsure what she's doing there.

But the fairy's spell was too powerful. Not one human being alive that day would have had a strong enough mind to remember what the universe used to be like, before Jason became Jessie.

And so no-one even noticed as Jessie walked along by the water, not quite male, not quite female, not quite anything.

At last, he found the spot.

It was tricky. By now his memory was so fogged that remembering his drinks with Amanda was like trying to remember a dream he had at the age of five.

After walking up and down the development three or four times though, Jessie was sure he'd found it.

The place where he'd made a wish that changed his life.

The bare bulbs strung around the old oak tree were turned off in the mid-morning light, as dull and lifeless as Jessie's old life.

Nonetheless, as he walked into the seating area and touched the tree, Jessie felt a shiver go down his spine. Felt a tingling of magic.

Yep, this was the place all right.

With furtive little glances, Jessie looked around him, strangely afraid that people might be watching and laughing at his actions.

But there was barely anyone there to see him. The one cleaner working in the bar looked so unconcerned that Jessie suspected he could've rode an elephant in there and the guy wouldn't have looked twice.

"This is where it happened, isn't it?" He murmured, in a voice that was higher in pitch than it

had been the day before. “You. You’re the one that changed me.”

The tree didn’t answer. It simply stood there, as it had since time immemorial, a silent witness to the centuries.

“I-I can’t really remember what I used to be like,” Jessie whispered, “but you can, can’t you? You know who I was... *what* I was.

And that means you can change me back.”

If the tree was listening, it didn’t show it. With a tiny sigh, Jessie lowered a hand that was getting smaller and daintier by the day.

“Here goes then.”

The genderless figure that used to be a man closed its eyes. Took a breath.

“I wish... I *wish* I wasn’t changing, that everything would stop and I would go back to like before.”

Whatever that means, a grim little voice whispered in his head.

Jessie waited for a sign. For a rustling in the leaves. For a tinkling of magic. For anything that would signal his nightmare was now over.

But there was nothing, not even a faint breeze to give some illusion of change.

The last fairy in their city had gone as soon as she cast her spell, vanished from this place, taking her magic with her.

And now there was nothing in the world that could stop Jessie from becoming the girl he was destined to be.

Four

It was a cool fall day.

Outside the window, the city glistened from the recent rainfall. The heat of the summer had ended Labor Day with a terrific rainstorm, and everything had been squalls and thunder since.

The Art Deco skyscrapers shone faintly in the shafts of sunlight that broke through the clouds. By the mid-sized city's riverfront, café owners looked at their shrinking clientele and muttered dark things about early winters under their breath.

Passing through the glass corridors of the office, Jessie saw precisely none of this.

He was too busy trying to remember what the *hell* he was doing here.

It was ten days since Jessie had placed his hand against an old oak tree and wished to go back to being normal again. Nearly three weeks since a man called Jason had sat under that very same oak tree and made a wish that *did* come true.

In that time, the person who used to be Jason had changed almost beyond recognition.

The Jessie who was now walking through the office was a petite 5'5", with chestnut hair that flowed down their back, stopping below their shoulders.

They were slender, with a narrow, lightweight body clad in a simple tank top with a smart jacket thrown over the top, and a basic floral skirt fluttering around their bare legs.

They wore Converse sneakers and a touch of makeup, bracelets dangling from one dainty wrist.

But that wasn't the most striking set of changes. No, to see those, you'd have to look much closer.

See the way Jessie's hips swell outwards somewhat, still growing and changing as they grow towards womanhood?

See Jessie's B cup breasts, still developing, swelling out from their chest, bouncing slightly as they walk?

See Jessie's face, now not only round and feminine, but *younger*, too, like someone aged 14 or 15 at most?

Had a fairy been flitting around the office that day, she could have told you, *well, it's not finished yet, is it? Look: Jessie's jawline is too prominent for a girl, and those hands are way too big! Not sure about the broadness of the shoulders, either...*

But! The fairy might have finished with a smug flourish, *it's definitely coming along! I'd say darling Jessie is about 75 percent female now, and getting more so all the time!*

But, of course, there was no fairy in their city that day, never would be again.

All Jessie knew as they walked past the window was that they were feeling *real confused* lately.

"Hey, honey, how's things with my little worker?"

"Hey, Callie."

Jessie flashed a smile at the attractive dark skinned woman sat behind the desk. With their mind so fogged by the magic, Jessie had no idea they now had the high-pitched, slightly squeaky voice of a teen girl.

“What’s up?”

“For *me*? Oh, nothing much. Same old, same old,” Callie gave Jessie a warm, almost motherly look. “But somebody wants to see *you*.”

She nodded in the direction of the offices, far across the open plan workspace.

“Amanda?” Jessie frowned. “But, why would the boss wanna...?”

The words trailed off as vague, contradictory thoughts tried to push their way inside Jessie’s skull.

She’s not the boss! I’m the boss! She’s not meant to...

God, I wish I could kiss her. I wish I could tear Amanda out those clothes of hers and give her a...

Jessie shook their head, chasing the weird thoughts away. They were thinking odd things all the *time* recently.

“Why would the boss wanna see an intern?” Callie was saying. She shrugged. “Maybe she wants to offer you a job.”

A little laugh escaped Jessie’s throat, light and soft.

“I’m maybe a bit young for a proper job, y’know?”

Again, the weird thoughts came:

No you’re not, you’re a grownup! You’re a fully grown ma-!

Again, the thoughts vanished with a simple shake of the head.

“Whatever she wants, I’d advise you get over there fast, little missy,” Callie was saying in a conspiratorial voice, “time and Amanda wait for no man.”

Suddenly, the dark-skinned woman gave a little shake of her own. If you’d watched her eyes very closely at that exact moment, you may have seen a flicker of confusion as a strange thought was chased away.

“Sorry, Jessica, I didn’t mean to call you a *man*. I meant, time and Amanda wait for no-*one*.” She leaned back with a little smile. “Not even teenage girls.”

The moment the words left Callie’s mouth, Jessie was so *sure* they could see little stars twinkling about their head...

...but then they gave a little shake of their head, the stars vanished...

...and then Jessica was smiling back at Callie, tossing one hand through her long, chestnut hair and laughing the insult off.

“No biggie. I got what you meant. I guess I’d better...”

She pointed in the direction of Amanda’s office, wondering why she felt confused, like

something big and vital had just changed without her knowing.

Callie nodded.

“Guess you better had.”

Jessica was just about to go, when a thought occurred to her.

“Oh, hey. How’s Tyrone?”

“Manic, like usual. At that age...” Callie laughed. “But he’s missing his babysitter. I think maybe he’s got a little crush.”

“Ok. Uh, great.” Jessica flashed Callie one last smile. “See you later.”

And then she was off, making a beeline straight for Amanda’s office, wondering why the heck Callie was telling her all about her son’s dumb crush on the babysitter.

But then, Jessica had been wondering *why the heck...* about a lot of things recently.

Like, take that thing with the apartment and that woman.

It had been weird, *really* weird. A few days ago, she’d been in this big apartment downtown one evening which she could hardly remember any more when some woman walked in.

At the time, Jessica (*was that still my name then?* Jessica wondered as she walked. *Wasn’t it something like Jessie, or...?* But she shook the thought away) had been examining her breasts in the mirror, wondering if they were too big, or not big enough, when the door had slammed and she’d found herself face to face with *her*.

Who the hell are you?! The woman had asked.

What do you mean who the hell am I? Jessica had responded, trying to act tough, *who the hell are you?*

But, inside, she’d been scared.

There was something... *familiar* about this woman. Something that had sent strange and contradictory signals deep into Jessica’s brain, almost like she knew this woman intimately, maybe even better than she knew herself.

I’m Katherine, the woman had responded, *and this is our apartment.*

Our? Jessica had had time to think, *who else...?*

And then the tall, muscular black guy with the shaved head had poked his head around the door, protectively placed one hand on the small of Katherine’s back, and Jessica’s head had felt like it was exploding.

Oddly, she could no longer remember the real details of what had happened next.

It was like the memory was already fading from her mind, becoming a mere pencil sketch that was slowly getting erased.

She thought there had been an argument. That she’d screamed *but this is my home!*

She thought, too, that even as she’d screamed those words, a quiet little voice had told her *no, it’s not, and you know it.*

She thought, too, that the woman had called her *Jason* at one point, and then everyone had gotten confused.

That's the trouble with magic, a fairy might have sighed, it works in fits, in stops and starts. Confusion for everyone affected is kind of the default setting.

Nevertheless, it does work. And eventually it'll even wipe your memories of all that confusion!

Indeed, it was already happening. The argument was just a blur in Jessica's mind, as it was just a blur in the mind of Katherine, and of the new boyfriend the spell had given her.

(Although Jessica wasn't aware of it, at that very moment Katherine was on the other side of the city, frowning to herself as she remembered that weird girl she'd found in her apartment the other day. The girl who reminded her so much of someone, someone she'd once loved a very long time ago...

And then she shook her head and the memory vanished once and for all, and Katherine could no longer remember her relationship with Jason or meeting Jessica at all.)

After leaving that woman's apartment, Jessica had wandered the city, feeling lost and dazed for what felt like forever.

She hadn't really been thinking about where she was going, focusing only on putting one foot in front of the other, in trying to make sense of her life recently.

She'd just been deep in thought about the way people at work were starting to refer to her as "her", and "she", and whether that was normal, when she'd felt her feet stop moving and had looked up.

To her amazement, she'd been stood outside a small home in the suburbs.

It was a family home, a white painted, clapboard house surrounded by trees, set a discreet distance back from the street, identical to the few hundred other houses around it.

Lights had been on in the downstairs windows, and shining from one upstairs bedroom, too. Sounds had drifted out onto the darkened street. Talking. Laughter. TV.

For a long time, Jessica had simply stood beneath the warm halo of a streetlamp, looking at this strange house. Feeling drawn to it without knowing why. Like it meant something to her. Like it...

Abruptly, Jessica had walked up to the porch, feeling like her body was moving without any input from her brain.

She'd raised one hand, made a fist, wrapped on the wooden front door. There had been a pause, the muffled sound of voices, footsteps...

And then Jessica had been looking up into the face of a large, middle aged, balding man who stared at her and then shook his head like he was trying to chase a strange thought away.

"Jessica...?" The man had said.

"Dad...?" Jessica had felt herself reply.

And then the man had been bellowing *where the hell have you been, young lady?!* and Jessica felt herself screaming back *just out! I'm allowed to go out!* and then the two of them had been in

the middle of a full-blown screaming father-daughter argument, both their brains fizzing with confusion.

Jessica had vague memories of screaming at the man she called “dad” that he was *so unfair!*

She had memories, too, of a short, middle aged woman with chestnut hair coming out and trying to tell her in a conciliatory tone that *we were worried sick, honey*, and Jessica had screamed at her *Mom! I’m not a baby anymore!*

But Lucy is, dad had bellowed, *you were meant to babysit her, remember?*

Jessica had been just about to scream *who the actual fuck is Lucy?* when she’d happened to glance into the living room of this conservative, family home, and seen a girl of about nine with chestnut hair like hers, smirking at Jessica getting chewed out by mom and pop.

After that, her mind was a blank, except for a faint memory of lying face first on a bed in a teenage girl’s room that was both completely alien and comfortingly familiar all at once, crying into a pillow and wailing *everything’s wrong! Can’t you feel it? Everything’s changing!*

But why she would yell such a thing, Jessica could no longer say.

Hadn’t she *always* lived in that suburban home, with her mom and dad and little sister Lucy?

Where else would you expect a teenage girl to live?

Jessica came to a stop outside the door to Amanda’s office, tried to push down the memories flashing through her teenage head. She smoothed her blazer down, gave her clothes a guilty look.

Man, maybe I should have dressed more smart for this...

But what could she do now? So she simply tapped on the door, trying not to think about the argument she’d had after she last tapped on a wooden door, and stepped through the moment she heard Amanda call *come*.

The inside of the office had changed as much as the rest of the universe in the last few weeks.

Had Jessica’s old male form, Jason, seen the office and the woman sat in it, he would’ve felt like he was going mad.

But that part of Jessica was now completely erased from history, just as her life as Jessie was fading away.

So when she took in the diplomas on the wall, the photographs of Amanda and Bryan smiling away at camera together, she didn’t freak out.

She just politely took the seat Amanda offered with a smile.

“I like those earrings,” Amanda said as Jessica sat down, “your mom must be pretty progressive to let you get them pierced at your age.”

“Huh? Oh, these.” Jessica touched her earlobes, gave an embarrassed smile. “They’re fake, just clip-ons. My mom wouldn’t...”

“Pity,” Amanda sighed. “I remember wearing clip-ons when I was younger, oh my God, they hurt almost more than just getting the damn things pierced.”

Jessica simply sat in silence, not really sure what she was meant to say. Not really sure why a

tiny bit of her brain seemed to be wondering what it'd feel like to kiss Amanda, either.

When it became clear that what little girl chat the teenage girl and thirty year old woman could conceivably have had come and gone, Amanda leaned back behind her desk, regarded Jessica with interested eyes.

Had you told Amanda herself just three weeks ago that she'd make such a commanding presence as a boss, she wouldn't have believed you.

"So, I had to take an unexpected call this morning," she said at last. "I suspect you know where it was from."

"My parents?" Jessica's heart skipped a beat. "Did they...?"

She trailed off as Amanda waved her hand.

"No, not that. Trust me, if there was an issue with your mom and dad I wouldn't wait so long to call you in here. This was, well...

It was your *school*."

"My *school*?!" Jessica was so surprised she nearly fell out of her chair. "But I don't go to-!"

For a second, stars seemed to twinkle around Jessica's head. The teenage girl slowly closed her mouth.

Of course she went to school. That's what all teenagers did, what they legally had to do.

So why couldn't she remember anything about it?

Across the desk, Amanda raised one eyebrow in a jokey manner.

"Yes, it seems Rhonda Jackson High is all too aware you don't go to school, little lady. And they seem *very* keen to get you back right away."

"But I'm not meant to..." Jessica clutched her head, wishing she could think clearly. "I'm-I'm *meant* to be here!"

She didn't know why she said it. Part of her didn't even believe it.

Yet there was an equally large part of her that felt *terrified*. As if leaving this office here, in this building, would somehow result in her losing something very special.

"Look, Jessica," Amanda was saying, "I know we've all enjoyed having you here as an... an..."

The older woman frowned, shook her head, before composing herself and continuing:

"As a *summer* intern. But it was only ever meant to be a few weeks, remember?"

"No! I mean, I..."

But then a memory bubbled up inside Jessica's head, of a meeting in this very office, just three short weeks ago.

She was sat there, dressed in the smartest clothes she could get her fourteen year old hands on, trying to look serious as Amanda asked her questions about why she wanted this intern position.

She could remember very clearly the way she kept unconsciously digging her nails into her palms, convinced she was making a boob of herself, that she wasn't going to get it. That girls

like her never got the breaks that Chloe and Annie did...

(*Who are Chloe and Annie?* Jessica wondered, but the memory was already moving too fast for her to stop and think).

And then, all of a sudden, Amanda was smiling. Saying congratulations, I think we just found our summer girl, sticking out her hand for Jessica to shake as Jessica realized with a sensation of vertigo that she'd actually done it, that she'd actually got a grownup job!

Two weeks, *Amanda said as the two girls shook hands, don't worry, you'll fit right in. Have you met Callie...?*

The memory faded away, dissipated into the far corners of Jessica's mind. The teen girl let her protests die on her tongue.

Of course. A summer internship, just to keep her occupied over the last couple of weeks of August. Just to prove to her mom that she *wasn't* useless, that she really had dreams of being a high powered business woman one day.

Why else would a young girl be working in an office like this?

"You've been here an extra week now," Amanda was saying. "And it's been great, for all of us. Listen, you can reapply here the moment you leave school, God knows there aren't enough confident women in this industry..."

But not yet, OK? The government will come down on us like a ton of bricks if they hear we're keeping kids your age out of school."

She gave Jessica an apologetic smile.

"Callie's already called you a cab, they'll take you straight there..."

She seemed to think for a moment, then stood up and held out her hand. Jessica automatically jumped up and shook it.

"You really were great, though, Jessica. Really. If you ever want me to write to your teachers and say you deserve all the extra credit they can throw at you, let me know."

A thought seemed to occur to her.

"Or, y'know, if you fancy a bit of office experience next summer..."

And so it was that, ten minutes later, Jessica found herself sat in the back of a cab taking her to school, wondering why nothing about her life seemed to make sense.

The office... the apartment... arguing with that woman... parents who seemed like strangers one moment, and family the next...

All these things rattled around her head as the cab moved through the city, out of the business district, towards the suburbs.

It was like being able to see the outline of a distant building through fog, but not get any of the detail. As Jessica clutched her head, she knew *something* was wrong.

But what, she couldn't say.

C'mon, think... think!

She'd had the same feeling the night before, as she undressed and stood before her bedroom mirror, examining her body almost like it was an alien object.

She remembered examining her still-developing boobs, wondering why they seemed too big, despite being only B cups.

She remembered touching her face as she leaned close to the mirror. Gently massaging the skin as she took in her dark eyes, perfectly oval face and little button nose that made her look so impish.

She remembered frowning down at the tiny worm of a penis still protruding from her crotch and wondering if teenage girls were *meant* to have dicks.

If their torsos were *meant* to be so masculine in shape.

She sighed out loud. She just didn't *know* anymore.

Just as Jessica was thinking these confusing thoughts, there was a little jolt. The cab came to a stop. A familiar-looking face was suddenly leering at her, smiling jovially.

"OK, little lady, this is us!"

"What do you mean?" Jessica stirred. "Where are...?"

And then she saw the sign. Saw the words RHONDA JACKSON HIGH, and she knew.

Not that this knowledge stopped the cab driver from telling her anyway.

"Where do ya *think*?"

He suddenly put on a deliberately pompous, official-sounding voice.

"Young lady... welcome to *school*."

Five

When he was young – *really* young, in his original, male body – Jason had always been one of the non-entities at school. A kid who kept his head down and stayed out of trouble.

Oh, he hadn't been a loser or anything. But he one hundred percent also hadn't been a rebel.

If the Jason part of Jessica's brain hadn't already been erased by the magic, it would've found its new body's attitude to the rules almost weirder than its new gender.

"A whole *week*? You didn't think to ask someone?"

"No, sir, I guess not." Jessica slouched in her seat before the principal, every fiber of her young being radiating the aura of someone who does not give a single shit. "Guess it must've slipped my mind."

"*Slipped your mind?!?*"

The bald, red-faced man wiped his face with the back of one hand. Took a deep breath.

"Look, this is a school that believes in free enterprise. We honestly think it's *great* that you're so interested in a business career. Honestly, more young women need to..."

As the man talked, Jessica listened impassively, almost insolently.

Had her teenage brain been more fully formed, she might have been able to explain her attitude. To explain that she wasn't disrespectful by nature – she'd been nice enough to Amanda, hadn't she? – she just didn't think it was worth wasting time with people who didn't deserve respect.

But she was far too young to know her own mind so well.

So instead she simply sat there, the confusion of the day forgotten in her desire to stand up to this man's non-existent authority.

"...and, while we're talking about it, dressing more modestly too!"

"Huh?" Jessica hadn't meant to completely zone out like that.

The red-faced man sighed again, nodded down at Jessica's legs.

"Your skirt. It's too high. School rules state..."

Incredulously, Jessica looked down at her slender teenage body.

"You're seriously *telling* me to pull my skirt down?" A laugh. "That's-!"

That's bullshit! She'd wanted to say, the fading adult part of her still convinced it could dress however the fuck it wanted.

But then there was that vague impression of stars twinkling again and Jessica's righteous anger vanished and was replaced by the sulky anger of a teen caught breaking the rules.

With the principal's beady eyes still on her (*he literally looks like a pig*, she thought to herself), Jessica gave a tiny sigh, stood up. Tugged her skirt down so the hem was below her knees.

"Can I go now?" She asked tonelessly, eventually adding: "...sir?"

The principal gave her what she guessed was meant to be a hard stare.

“Don’t push your luck, Miss Leigh. If I see you in my office again this semester...”

He let the threat hang in the air. Jessica waited for a moment to see if there was gonna be any more *boring ass* talking, then, when none came, silently left the room.

The moment the door shut behind her, Jessica gave a little exhale, pulled her skirt back up again, tucking its band down so it looked so much shorter than it actually was.

She smiled at her exposed legs.

There, that was better. Just like she liked it. Like a *grownup* might wear it.

Like a business woman like Amanda might wear it.

Then Jessica was off through the school, heading out into the midst of a new life she didn’t even realize was new.

First period had already started, and the hall was mostly empty except a few stragglers.

Nonetheless, as she walked towards God knew where, Jessica had a strange, almost creepy feeling that people were watching her.

OK, not *watching* watching. More, like, giving her these weird little stares before shaking their heads and looking away again, confusion on their faces. Almost like...

Almost like she wasn’t meant to be there, but some invisible force was stopping them from realizing it.

For an objective observer, one who hadn’t been affected by the spell, the reason for this would have been obvious.

Although Jessica was more than three quarters a teenager girl by now, she was still not yet fully formed.

Her way of walking was somehow *masculine*, not the sort of way a teen girl usually held herself.

Her chest and shoulders, too, were just too broad for the rest of her body, giving her a weird, almost triangular shape that was fading all the time, but still noticeable.

But no such objective observer existed, even *could* exist. The magic was simply too strong, too elemental.

All the few kids in the hall that day were aware of was a faint feeling of confusion, a faint feeling that there was something *wrong* with this girl that they couldn’t put their fingers on, followed by the feeling of a magical curtain falling across their minds, making them forget *why* they’d thought such a thing.

For Jessica, still somehow unsure if this school was really hers, the sensation was eerie, almost like she was in a horror movie or something.

They’re probably just jealous they’ve been sat on their asses here while I’ve been off networking like a pro... she told herself. *Yeah, that’s probably it.*

Not that she really believed it.

She was still trying to figure out what was going on when the boy touched her arm.

It was a light touch. Playful. More a tap than a long, lingering stroke or anything.

It was still enough to send Jessica's transforming brain bananas.

There was a little jump of surprise that made her whole body twitch, followed almost a microsecond later by a feeling of hot embarrassment, which quickly mutated into anger, anger at whoever had touched her.

Like she was in slow motion, Jessica felt herself turn around, her ponytail flicking out behind her, felt herself getting ready to shout at whatever *asshole* had startled her like that...

And then she felt her body stop. Felt the anger drain out of her, like someone had just opened a valve in her feet and all that poison had gone flooding away.

In its place came a feeling like her legs were turning into water.

The boy now smiling at her was the most beautiful creature she'd ever seen.

He was tall, nearly 6ft, even at this young age. He had green eyes and a languid smile beneath a mop of messy, stylish ginger hair.

His body was naturally broad, like he played sports, with biceps that were starting to get big from working out.

But if his body said *jock*, his clothes said otherwise.

The boy was dressed in a simple pair of dark blue skinny jeans that clung to his legs, showing off their power. A thin navy blue sweater with thick horizontal white stripes that vanished at the chest gave him a smart air.

He had a dorkily old fashioned watch clasped around one wrist. A pair of fake brown leather shoes. A tiny Extinction Rebellion pin gleamed on the strap of his satchel.

He looked like an Instagram model brought into the real world. A cool, confident boy of 15 who is already preparing himself to take on the world. The sort of boy whose smile could have launched every damn ship in a harbor.

And.

He.

Was.

Looking.

At.

Her.

All these thoughts flashed through Jessica's head in the second and a half it took her to turn around.

For a moment, she wasn't sure if she was going to hit this strange boy, or just swoon into his arms like a character in one of those Harlequin romances her grandma used to read.

But then she felt her lips moving automatically, heard her voice and realized her body had way more of a handle on this than her mind did.

"You *asshole*! I actually came this close to screaming like a... a... I dunno, something that screams."

The words were angry, but Jessica couldn't help but notice that she was smiling as she said them. That she'd automatically reached out to touch the boy's arm, just as he'd touched hers.

That standing here in front of him, being the focus of his attention, was the nicest feeling in the *world*.

Now the boy's smile was turning into something more like a good-natured smirk.

"Yeah, right. I don't even know if it's *possible* to scare you. How many times have I tried, huh? And each time..."

As the boy spoke, Jessica felt a strange, powerful urge to stand up on tiptoes, wrap her arms around him and kiss him.

The feeling was so sudden, so sharp, it knocked her off balance.

Whoa! Hold on... a part of her mind seemed to say. *I'm not gay!*

At the voice, Jessica frowned to herself.

No, she wasn't gay. Not that being gay was a problem or anything, obviously. But she was straight.

And what could be more natural than a straight girl wanting to kiss a handsome guy?

Outwardly, though, she didn't miss a beat.

"And each time I wonder why I didn't find a better boyfriend."

The moment the word was out her mouth, Jessica knew it was true.

The magical curtain swept across her mind again, and, when it had passed, she knew this beautiful boy – a boy a whole *year* older than her! – was her boyfriend, just as clearly as she knew the sun rose in the east or that she was female.

She also knew his name.

"You're welcome to look," Ben shrugged, casual as you like, "but you're probably not gonna find anyone. Not in this school."

He gave a passing group of jocks a sidelong glance.

"Not 'less you like meatheads all of a sudden."

"You're the meathead. Trying to scare me." Jessica playfully punched her boyfriend's arm. At the same time, her mind was in turmoil.

A boyfriend... I actually have a boyfriend, and he's gorgeous!

The thought zinged through her body, filling her with happiness.

But there was another, stranger thought lurking just below the surface.

So why the hell don't I remember anything about him...?

As the poor, transforming girl who used to be Jason struggled with the havoc the magic was wreaking inside her brain, Ben nonchalantly slipped his hands into his pockets.

"Hey. What class you got now?"

“Like I care,” Jessica affected an unbothered pose of her own. “Something dumb.”

If at that moment Jason had reappeared inside Jessica’s brain and seen how perfectly like a wannabe rebellious teen she was acting, he might have died with embarrassment.

But, of course, he didn’t.

Ben nodded thoughtfully at her words. Now she was 14, Jessica was suddenly aware just how much older and wiser 15 can seem when you’re that age.

“Wanna skip it and hang out with me then?”

“Huh? Oh, no, I don’t think...”

The offer took her off guard. Automatically, the older, more responsible part of Jessica’s brain took over, turning Ben down, accepting that she had to get to class, no matter how little she wanted to.

But then something stopped her. A little voice, asking her *when are you gonna be young again? Good point*, thought Jessica, *it’s not like adults can go back to being teenagers.*

So she stopped herself from saying no. Shook her head a little, so her chestnut bangs fell across her eyes. Smiled up at Ben from underneath them in a way she instinctively knew was attractive to boys.

“OK then. What do you wanna do?”

In response, Ben simply dropped her a knowing wink.

“Follow me,” the boy said.

*

It was cool out here, on the fringes of the school playing fields.

A breeze unfurled across the empty football field, visible from the way it bent back the stalks of grass even before you could feel it caress your skin.

Jessica wrapped her blazer tighter around her body, wishing she’d asked the cab driver to swing past her house and pick up something warmer.

“Cold?” One of the boys – a blond, wholesome-looking kid – said, already starting to pull off his sweater to offer it to her.

“Nah, I’m fine.”

Jessica thought she saw a flicker of disappointment in the kid’s eyes, like not getting to play the knight in shining armor had just ruined his morning.

Boys... she mentally rolled her eyes, sometimes they just wanna treat you like you’re made of glass...

They were out on the furthest extremes of school property, by a little copse of woodland. About as far as you could get from the school building without officially playing truant.

“They” were Jessica, Ben, the wholesome-looking boy (who Jessica had mentally christened *Captain America*, just like the Avenger), a male friend of his who looked sorta like a rat, and

three girls, two rocking the punk style as much as they dared, and the other, Wendy, in a simple sweater and tee combo.

The moment Jessica and Wendy had opened their mouths to introduce themselves, they'd both felt their minds go momentarily blank, before being overcome by a sudden feeling that they'd known one another all their lives.

Now they were sat, chatting on the edge of their group, while the two punky girls clumsily smoked and tried to flirt with Ben, and Captain America and his friend kept their eyes glued intently on Jessica and Wendy.

If Jessica was gonna be honest with herself, this really *wasn't* what she'd been expecting when Ben made his offer.

"Ugh." Wendy's voice was low as the chubby girl casually tossed her black hair, hiding her face from the boys, "Mark's creepy little friend keeps *staring* at you. I swear he's this close to just crawling over here and licking your tits."

Whose Mark? Jessica almost said, but then it clicked that Wendy was talking about Captain America and she felt a pang of disappointment.

Mark? That's not the right name for a guy like that...

Outwardly, though, she made a big show of looking around at the rat-like guy opposite them.

Just feet away from her, Rat Boy blinked awkwardly, tried to smile (it looked more like a sneer), then quickly looked away.

"You're not meant to *look!*" Wendy hissed, jabbing Jessica in the ribs as she did so, "just, y'know, look."

"What's the difference?"

"Intense awkwardness," Wendy murmured. "Getting into a shitty conversation."

As if on cue, Captain America grinned at them.

"Hey, are you guys talking about us? It's not nice to keep secrets, you know."

He was talking to both of them, but his eyes weren't leaving Jessica's face, as if Wendy was an afterthought. Beside him, Rat Boy was now letting his eyes slither over Jessica's body.

"We're talking about girl stuff. Periods and having blood in your hooch, you wouldn't understand."

Wendy's words made Captain America's eyes flicker, but he still kept right on smiling, right on looking at Jessica.

"Oh really? Huh, well that's... I guess that's..."

The way he was looking at her made Jessica feel puzzled. Like he didn't just want to talk to her. Like he-like he wanted to *kiss* her or something.

But why would he wanna do that? He's a guy isn't he? Maybe he's gay, or... or...

She frowned to herself.

Wait, that's not right...

Boys had been interested in her for about three years now, she was sure of it. At first it had been weird and gross, but now, y'know, depending on the boy...

Before she could get too tangled up in confusing mess that was her brain today, Wendy was leaning right in and whispering in her ear, just like they were kids or something.

It would've seemed funny to an adult. The mixture of grown up affectations like smoking and romance alongside an action that seemed to belong to a kid of about 10.

But there were no adults there. Just a mixture of 14 and 15 year-olds who were trying to figure out how to be normal teenagers without a roadmap or anyone to guide them.

"I swear, the way Mark's looking at you is driving those bitches nuts. That one who's all over Ben, you should see the look she's giving you."

Jessica glanced sideways, to where Ben was telling some story. Both the punk girls were laughing but, sure enough, they kept shooting little sideways glares at Jessica.

When they'd all first arrived here, Jessica had decided these girls must be her friends or something.

Looking at them now, she realized, with a feeling of absolute certainty, that these girls might be her friends, but they were also probably talking behind her back about what a *slut* she was.

For the first time, Jessica got a real inkling of how complicated it was to be a teenage girl.

"I dunno why they care," Wendy muttered, leaning back from Jessica, "it's like they actually *want* Mark and his pet staring at them."

"Who's Mar...? Oh, right."

"Did you guys say something about a pet?" Captain America (*Mark!* Jessica's brain yelled at her. *His name is Mark!*) asked. "Hey, we got a new dog last week..."

At the bizarre conversation opener, Jessica couldn't help it.

She snorted with laughter, making a bubble of snot blow out her nose.

She was all too aware that the punk girls were now looking at her like she was the most tragic thing ever, that Mark had turned a little green around the gills, and that Wendy was struggling to contain her own laughter.

Aware, too, that Ben was watching her, a half-suppressed smile on his teenage lips.

At last, the fit of giggles subsided. Jessica wiped her nose with the back of one hand, giggled again, nodded at Wendy.

"I'm gonna go."

She got to her feet, walked past the two smoking girls, gently kicked Ben's foot.

"Walk? Now?"

Slowly, the tall boy looked down at her foot, resting against his. Back up into her eyes. Jessica felt a little thrill run through her body as he broke into a smile.

"Sure," he said.

*

“You ever think about stuff?”

“Like what?”

“I dunno. Stuff.”

A long pause, broken only by the sounds of leaves crunching underneath their feet.

“I keep wondering what I’m going to do. Y’know, after all this.”

The boy risked a glance at her.

“You got any ideas?”

“Me? I’m gonna be in business. Professional smasher of glass ceilings.”

As she said the words, Jessica smiled to herself. An image flitted through her head, of Amanda, sat behind her vast desk telling her they needed ballsy girls like her in this industry.

OK, maybe she didn’t actually say ballsy, but I guess that was the subtext.

“You’re lucky,” Ben was saying. “You know what you wanna do. Not everyone does.”

“What about your climate stuff?” Jessica nodded at his extinction rebellion pin. “You’re always going on about that...”

(is he? She wondered. I mean, I guess he must, or else I wouldn’t say it. But why can’t I remember it?)

“...you could be a professional activist. Like Greta Thunder-whatever. I’d follow you.”

“You’d really follow me?”

Jessica gave the 15-year old boy a mischievous smile.

“To the ends of the Earth.”

She thought for a moment.

“Not that that’s very far away, I guess...”

Somewhere back behind them, they heard a girl laughing. One of the other two, not Wendy.

Briefly, Jessica wondered how Wendy was getting on, left all alone with Mark and the other three.

She’s literally fine, she thought, unaware that the fairy magic was writing the information into her brain as fast as the neurons could fire. She’s probably just sat there with some Andrea Dworkin book out, deliberately making those assholes as uncomfortable as possible.

The thought made Jessica smile without really knowing why.

She knew she was glad to have a friend like Wendy, someone she could be so close to, who so didn’t give a shit about whatever anyone else thought.

But, at the same time...

Why did she have this weird feeling like she’d only just met her?

“I don’t even know if I want to have a family or anything,” Ben was saying now. “It’s weird, isn’t it? How hard this stuff is to decide.”

Had Jason still existed, he would’ve felt his jaw drop at Ben’s words.

You’re only fifteen for Chrissakes! He would have yelled. *You’re not meant to get this shit sorted until your twenties.*

I’m nearly thirty, I’m allowed to complain. You? You’re just a kid.

It would never have occurred to the vanished man that these things always feel urgent to teenagers, that time never feels more like its slipping away than when you’re young.

But Jason wasn’t there. Jessica was.

And she knew only too well how hard it is to be in high school, knowing the big, scary world of college is already waiting to chew you up and spit you out.

“I do know one thing though,” Ben said, keeping his eyes ahead, not looking at Jessica.

“What’s that?”

“Walking here right now. Being with you.” He took her hand in his. “It’s nice. More than nice.”

The moment Ben touched her hand, Jessica felt a flash of *déjà vu* so strong she nearly gasped out loud.

Here she was, walking through the woodland, a masculine figure by her side, holding her hand.

It was just like a dream she’d had once. A dream that seemed to be inside another dream, a dream about a long lost life in the heart of the city. Of a sad and lonely man who’d now vanished forever.

Now all Ben needed to do was take her arm and turn her around and kiss her and her dream would come true. She was sure of it! She was...

“Ben...?” She whispered out loud.

In response, the boy came to a stop. Moved her hand so she was forced to turn and face him (well “forced” – Jessica didn’t exactly resist much).

For a long moment, boy and girl simply looked at each other. Ben with this beautiful, lost expression that made him look more attractive than ever; Jessica with an open longing she’d never felt before.

In that silence, she felt herself begin to tilt her head back, to purse her lips. Saw Ben start to lean down towards her, closing his eyes.

Felt the tingle of anticipation, the electric sense of two lovers about to lock lips and-

“Hey!”

“What *the-*?”

The two teenagers leaped back from one another as if stung, as if God himself had hurled a lightning bolt to stop them from kissing.

For a moment, Jessica’s mind was spinning, wondering where the voice came from, who it was,

why it-!

And then she turned and saw two piggy eyes frowning out of a fleshy, red face. A familiar look of anger, one she'd seen a million times before.

"Oh, um, hey Principal Hart," she said, weakly.

The look on the Principal's face told her all she needed to know about exactly how much shit she was in.

*

"...playing *truant* young lady?!"

"Mom! I-!"

"What sort of example are you trying to set for Lucy, huh?"

"Who gives a fuck about Lucy? She's a *dick*."

"Language!"

Jessica span around to face her sister with an open mouth.

"I can't believe this! You actually *can't* tell me to watch my language you total penis, I've *heard* you..."

Across the living room, Lucy grinned an annoying, younger sister grin so smug it made Jessica want to strangle her.

"Language," she repeated.

"Oh my *God!*"

"Leave Lucy out of this..."

"But mom, you're the one who-!"

"I don't care. You have any idea how much *kaka* we're gonna get from the school, hmm?"

Jessica rolled her eyes.

"Mom, you don't have to say *kaka*. You can say sh-"

"*Language!*"

"What's your *problem*, Lucy? I didn't even say it!"

Laughter, smug and annoying, in the way only a younger sister's laughter can be.

"Dad! Can you *please* tell mom and Luce..."

"I'm not telling them squat. You listen to your *momma*, Jessica. You've made us both very disappointed."

Helplessly, Jessica looked around the room, trying to find someone she could appeal to, one friendly face.

But no. Her entire family were looking at her like she was a piece of excrement the dog had just dumped on the floor.

So instead the teen girl simply let out a scream.

“You’re so unfair! I HATE YOU ALL!”

And then she was running, running up the stairs, her head all hot and prickly, her eyes stinging, not even thinking about where she was going, just needing to get as far away from them as possible.

Like she was a little girl all over again, Jessica threw herself onto her bed, buried her face in the pillow and burst into tears.

As she cried, she felt again that strange tug and pull of childhood and adulthood inside of her hormone-soaked brain.

On the one hand, she rationally knew that her parents had no choice but to blow up at her for skipping class. Knew that she really was in the wrong.

On the other, she still felt like she was being bullied and persecuted, like she was Joan of Arc or something, burned at the stake, a martyr for teenagers everywhere.

She lay there for what felt like forever, listening to the sounds of her parents, moving around downstairs, trying to act like nothing had happened.

I wish I was older, she thought, savagely. *I wish I’d go to sleep tonight and wake up tomorrow morning aged thirty so no-one could tell me what to do.*

In the back of her teenage brain, Jessica even began plotting how she’d sneak out of the house that night. How she’d go down to the riverfront and find one of those fairies her grandma used to tell her about, and force it to turn her into a grownup.

She was still pretending like this was something she was actually gonna do when her phone gave a quiet little buzz.

Wiping away her tears, suddenly ashamed of the childish way she’d just reacted, Jessica sat up, hotched herself over to the edge of the bed.

Sniffing quietly, she picked up her phone. Saw the message from Ben, poor Ben whose dad was mean and was probably getting a billion times worse than she was getting now.

THINKING OF YOU, was all the message said.

With a weak little smile, Jessica typed out THINKING OF YOU TOO.

She paused for a second, then added a wink emoji with a kiss. Then she decided that was too strong and settled for a simple wink.

Then she dropped the phone down onto the bedsheets and turned to her bedroom mirror.

In the depths of the glass, an attractive teen girl looked awkwardly back at her.

The girl’s face was blotchy from crying, her makeup run. But she still managed to look not like the loser she secretly worried she was, but like a normal teen girl.

The sort of girl someone else might want to be.

Maybe it’s not so bad, being me, Jessica thought to herself, in a moment of adult clarity. *Maybe I don’t wanna be a grownup after all.*

She was so absorbed with looking at her reflection and thinking of Ben that she didn't even notice the way magical stars seemed to twinkle and shine around her head.

Didn't notice the way the tiny nub of a penis in her pants vanished inside her skin, leaving her with a vagina.

Didn't even notice her final transition into a natural teenage girl.

Six

Ten days later.

It was a cool day in fall. Across the suburbs surrounding the city, the leaves were *just* starting to change their color, *just* starting their own transition.

The sky was speckled with clouds, some tall and heavy, some small and clumped together, almost like they were traveling in packs.

It was one of those days that could go either way: could become warm and spring-like, or could switch and turn into a mess of rain and misery.

Gazing out the dining room window of her small suburban home, Jessica decided she didn't care either way.

Nothing could spoil today for her.

"Right, who's next for waffles? Jessica?"

"Hmm? Oh, sure." Jessica handed her plate over, "thanks, dad."

"Don't thank him too soon," her mom murmured, not looking up from her tablet, "you haven't tried them yet."

The large, bald man Jessica now thought had always been her father did his best to look offended.

"Darling, you can insult my fashion sense, my lack of culture, you can even insult my performance in the bedroom..."

Across the table, Lucy choked on a piece of waffle. Jessica immediately pulled a face.

"Eww! Dad, don't be gross!"

"...but," dad went on, ignoring his daughters, "never, *ever* insult my waffle making."

He turned back to the counter, Jessica's plate in hand.

"At least, not unless you wanna go hungry."

"Who said anything about going hungry?" Mom replied, "I've got Lucy's portion right *here*."

On the word *here*, she snatched Lucy's last mouthful up from her plate and ate it with an evil little smile. Lucy looked scandalized.

"*Mo-om!*" Jessica's little sister gave her helpless look. "You're meant to be the *good guy!*"

"You can just steal some of Jessica's, she won't mind, will you?"

"Like *Hell* I won't!"

Although she sounded outraged, on the inside, Jessica couldn't help but smile to herself.

Look at us. We really are a normal family, aren't we? She thought. *In spite of everything...*

At that moment, all the arguments and punishments for skipping class a week ago seemed so far away, so inconsequential.

For the most fleeting second, Jessica even dared admit to herself that she really did love her family.

“Here you go, girl,” a plate groaning under the weight of syrup, chocolate sauce and (she assumed, under all the rest) waffle thudded to the table in front of Jessica, “and don’t give me any complaints about getting fat. An expanding waistline is an American *right*.”

“Have you literally ever known me to refuse food?”

Jessica bit into her waffle, made a semi-orgasmic noise.

“Dad... no joke, this is actually...”

“See?” Dad gave mom a cocky look. “Your daughter knows good food when she sees it.”

“Hmm. She never did have good taste. I’m *kidding*.”

Mom put down the tablet, offered her cheek up to her husband.

“You know I like winding you up,” she said as Dad gave her a quick peck. “That’s why you married me.”

“I married you because of how you look in a swimsuit.”

“Oh my *Godddd*,” groaned Jessica, “can’t you guys get a room?”

“We’ve got one, it’s upstairs.”

“Dad, I swear you are actually the funniest man alive.”

But still, she tucked into her waffle with a smile, happy that she had this life, that she had these absurd, lame parents, even this little sister who was *literally* a penis...

...happy, too, with the plans she had for today.

As she ate, Jessica frowned at Lucy, who was looking at her sister’s waffle with undisguised longing.

“What are you wearing?”

“What are *you* wearing?” Lucy pulled a face. “You look like a tramp mugged another tramp on his way to a sex party for tramps.”

“Oh my God...” Jessica laughed. “You’re actually starting to *dress* like me!”

“What? Am not! I don’t wanna look like a sex tramp!”

But there was no way Lucy could argue her way out of this one.

She really *was* starting to dress like her older sister.

For a moment, Jessica felt the teenage awkwardness start to rise up in her. Knew she could tease Lucy now until she started screaming, start an argument that would shatter the tranquility of this Saturday morning.

But then another part of her, a more mature part, quietly pushed that feeling back down. Whispered in her ear that she didn’t need to do this, that she didn’t need to spoil things.

So she just bit her lower lip and concentrated on her phone, trying not to smile like an evil older sister.

“Mom, I don’t look like Jessica, do I?”

“Sure you do, Lucy. When I first met you two, I thought you were sisters.”

“Dad! Mom, Dad’s being *funny* again!”

There was a new message on her phone from Mark. Jessica idly opened it, rolled her eyes.

I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU’RE DROPPING OUT OF AVENGERS. I ALREADY BOOKED THE TICKETS, AND NOW YOU’RE JUST...

She didn’t even bother reading to the end.

Boys... Jessica thought to herself. Why do they seem to think they own you?

Besides, she had something much more fun than cinema with Mark planned.

Something involving the boy of her dreams...

“Jessica. Jessica!”

“Huh?” Jessica blinked up at her mom.

“I *said*, how was babysitting?”

“Oh. Yeah. It was, um, great.”

It really hadn’t been that bad, to be honest. Jessica had sat up with 7-year old Tyrone watching retro monster movies and smiling to herself about the way the kid freaked out about Clover coming to eat the heroes.

When Tyrone’s mom had come home, the boy had been fast asleep and Jessica had pocketed the cash without any hassle.

Although there had been that *one* weird moment...

As she takes the twenty dollars from the elegant, dark skinned woman, a strange thought suddenly bubbles up into Jessica’s mind.

She feels like she should want to kiss this woman, to make love to her. She doesn’t – not even slightly – but there’s a residual feeling in the back of her mind, like she’s been telling herself she wants this woman for years, in spite of her hardwired sexuality.

“Something up?” *The woman asks. “You look kinda... I dunno. Spaced?”*

“It’s uh, it’s nothing,” *Jessica shakes her head, smiles. “Thanks, Callie. See you next time, I guess!”*

“See you next time,” *Callie smiles back.*

And then Jessica is off, pocketing the money, beginning the fifteen minute walk back to her parents’ house, unaware that she once knew Callie in a different way in a previous life, unaware that she really did once think she should try and seduce her...

The memory popped like a bubble. Jessica took her last bite of waffle.

“Yeah. Tyrone’s cool. And Callie’s nice, so...”

But her mom was no longer listening. Already checking her watch with a faintly startled air, like she couldn’t believe time moved *forwards* these days.

“Golly, it’s already... Jessica, you and your dad are going to need to hurry...”

“Mom, don’t say *golly*, it makes you sound like you live in the fifties.”

Nonetheless, Jessica drained her coffee (her parents had only let her start drinking coffee with breakfast a year or so ago, and it still made her feel pretty grownup), got to her feet.

“C’mon, dad.”

“Look at me: chef, taxi cab driver, lover extraordinaire...”

“DAD!”

“Shh, Lucy. Let him be funny... *Jessica!*”

“*What?!*”

“You forgot something.”

Mom offered her cheek up to her daughter, pursing her own lips a little.

With a sigh, Jessica came back through from the hallway, gave her mom a peck.

“Love you, sweetie.”

“Love you too, mom.”

It wasn’t until Jessica and her dad were in the car, driving toward the city, that Jessica realized she’d really meant it.

*

It had been weird, recently, she thought.

There had been the way she’d started examining her body obsessively in the bathroom mirror every night, before she went to bed.

She couldn’t quite remember why she’d done it. She had these vague memories of worrying her body looked too masculine, somehow. Like maybe her shoulders were too broad, or...

But, as the days passed, she’d become certain she was imagining it.

I mean, sure, maybe her hands were *slightly* too big, her gait too male, but...

But even those fears had vanished, over time.

And last night, after saying goodbye to Tyrone and Callie, she’d quietly let herself in, gone to the bathroom, stripped off...

...and realized it was all in her imagination.

From the glass, a normal teenage girl had looked back at her, looking 100 percent female.

Of course, like any teen, she’d seen things she’d wanted to change.

Boobs that she wished would grow just a *little* more. Hips that seemed to be growing awkwardly as she transitioned into womanhood.

An ass she kinda wished looked a bit bigger, like all those models on Instagram.

But these were tiny details. Details her brain, swimming in estrogen as it was, was destined to

obsess over in the coming months, but still.

These were ordinary, teenage worries. Not weird ones about her gender identity or anything deep like that.

She could tell, with a lack of modesty that surprised her, that she was pretty. Not, like, a supermodel or anything. But, y'know, not a troll either.

It was a good body, she thought. By and large. Maybe if she had a magic wand, she'd tweak it a little...

(Who was she kidding? She *definitely* would).

...but she'd never change it completely.

For the first time in either of her lives, Jessica was happy with who she was, with what she looked like.

No sooner had that thought formed than Jessica frowned to herself.

That was weird.

She could have *sworn* she just heard a distant giggling, like a fairy laughing on the breeze.

*

In the month or so since a man called Jason had sat under a tree and made a wish, the riverfront development had changed.

All the summer seating had now been taken indoors, or covered with tarpaulin to protect it from the rain and the wet, falling leaves.

Those cafes and restaurants still operating an outdoor service as the weather grew cooler had now placed heaters outside, so customers didn't freeze to death while taking in the view.

Not that there were many customers this early on a September Saturday.

Aside from a couple of guys sweeping up and the odd jogger passing on the riverfront, Jessica thought they probably had the place all to themselves.

"You know, I think this is the first time I ever came this side of the river," Ben murmured, looking around with an expression of vague surprise that Jessica found hilarious and cute all at once.

"Does it live up to your expectations?"

"I mean, I guess...?"

Ben's expression that said otherwise.

Jessica squeezed his hand. Pressed her teenage body up against his, enjoying the feeling of her breasts, resting against his strong arm.

"What about the company?"

Ben gave her a wry little smile.

"Oh, that's right. I *knew* there was a reason I was having an awesome time."

It was a little later in the morning. The weather had finally decided to turn gray and moody,

extinguishing the sun rays that had tried so hard to come out while Jessica was having breakfast. The two teens had originally decided to grab a coffee when the weather turned, sequestering themselves in a Starbucks and waiting for the sun to return.

But, after fifteen minutes of that, Jessica had suddenly decided *fuck it*, and demanded they go outside.

She couldn't explain it. It had been like an invisible force working inside her brain, directing her towards the riverfront.

Now she was here, though, she was glad.

She had her man, her life, and her happiness.

What did she care if the weather wasn't cooperating?

"Wanna hear something weird?"

"Go on."

"I had a dream just like this," Jessica said as they slowly walked. "We were walking like this, 'cept in a forest, and we were holding hands..."

"Sounds like a good dream."

"It was."

For a moment, a tiny frown creased Jessica's teen features.

"I can't remember when I had it. But it was good, I know that. And you know what happened next?"

"No, but I guess you're gonna tell me."

"We walked," Jessica said, dragging her sentence out. "And then you took my arm, like this, and you sorta... *turned* me, I guess, like this..."

The two came to a stop. Jessica was now looking up directly into Ben's eyes. The boy smiled a little.

"And then what?"

"And *then*..." Jessica took an imperceptible breath. Her heart was hammering in her chest, but she was desperate not to let her nervousness show. "You kissed me."

"Huh. OK. Like this?"

There was nothing but silence for the longest, most blissful moment. Two twenty-somethings out jogging as a couple gave each other a secret smile as they passed the kissing teens.

At long last, Jessica opened her eyes. Smiled up at the strong, gorgeous boy who had his hands around her waist.

"Yeah. Something like that."

Ben gave her a grin so handsome she thought her heart might explode.

"Hey, so remember what we were talking about? You know, when..."

“When we totally screwed up and got caught.”

A flicker of worry entered Jessica’s eyes.

“Oh God, Ben, did your dad...? I mean, was it...?”

“It was fine, for real.” Ben shook his head slightly, as if trying to shake the question away. “No, I wanted to say, about being grownup and all... I made a decision.”

Jessica waited, wondering what this boy would say. Content to just stand here so close to him while he collected his thoughts, happy to stand here forever, just to be near him.

“I decided I’m gonna do something. When I’m older. Get out of this town, like, New York or maybe LA, or even Canada or Europe, I dunno.

But I was thinking... maybe *hoping*, that... that, y’know...

That you could come with me.”

For a moment, Jessica didn’t know what to say.

Then a tiny thought sparked in the back of her brain, a tiny fragment of a life she used to lead, many eons ago.

Putting her own arms around Ben, she gave him a little smile she knew looked all sorts of cute and mysterious on her (God knew she’d spent long enough practicing).

“Wanna know what *I* think?”

“Of course.” She loved how serious Ben could be sometimes.

“I think that, maybe, we should just *enjoy* being young while we still can.”

She was so close to this boy now. So, so close. She glanced at his lips, smiled again.

“And what I’d enjoy most right now...”

She didn’t even finish.

Without her ever being aware of who moved first, she and Ben were kissing again, kissing like their lives depended on it, in the way only teenagers know how.

As they kissed, neither of them noticed the stars twinkling around Jessica’s head for the last time.

Neither of them noticed the way that teeny tiny fragment of Jason at the back of her head was erased forever.

Neither of them noticed the way the universe itself gave one last shudder, before settling into its permanent new form.

Neither of them knew that the spell had now erased itself even from the mind of the fairy that cast it. That there was no-one and nothing left in all of creation that could remember a sad, unhappy man called Jason who’d vanished long ago.

Gently, Jessica stepped back from her boyfriend. Took her hand in his again.

Look at me... a voice murmured in her head. *A boyfriend. An internship all lined up for next summer...*

I’m so grown up...

“You know, my grandma used to tell me that fairies lived down here that could grant wishes.”

“Yeah, I heard that too.” Ben could barely hide his goofy grin. “I came down once when I was ten, tried to wish for a new bike.”

“Did it work?”

“I mean, it was my birthday a week later and I did get a new bike, but I’m guessing that was more mom’s guilt about moving out than a fairy spell.”

He shrugged his broad shoulders, shoulders that made Jessica feel all strange and warm inside.

“Why?”

“I was just thinking what sort of wish I’d make if there were fairies here now.”

“And?”

“It’s gonna sound so cheesy...”

“I can deal with cheesy.”

Jessica closed her eyes, unable to keep the smile of her pretty, teenage face.

“I wish this morning would never end,” she said, loudly.

Of course, nothing happened. There were no fairies left to grant her wish.

No fairies left to see just how *happy* this transformed man was in his new life.

Slowly, Jessica opened her eyes. Watched as Ben pretended to look around for any fairies hiding nearby.

“You think it worked?” He asked.

Jessica gave him a little wink.

“Let’s find out,” she replied.

Then, taking his hand, Jessica and her boyfriend resumed their walk along the riverfront, the walk that would take Jessica away from her old life forever.

The long, crazy, *beautiful* walk that would take the two teenagers all the way into adulthood.

As they left behind the old grotto where fairies had once played, a thin beam of sunlight sliced its way through the clouds, casting an almost magical light over the young couple.

Neither Jessica nor Ben knew it, but, at that exact moment, they were the happiest two people alive.

*

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Free Extract:

The Teacher who Became a Teenage Girl

That was as far as Pete got. At his colleague's words, Simon frowned at him.

"Pete? What... what are you *talking* about? I *am* a teacher..."

At that moment, something seemed to click in Simon's mind. A strange switch was flicked, and he suddenly became horribly aware of several things at once.

The first was how much *smaller* he was. Even sat down like this, he could tell that he no longer felt like a tall, 6ft2 man, but like someone maybe ten inches shorter.

His body, too seemed to take up less space. While he'd never been fat like some teachers, or big from hitting the gym like Pete, he'd not exactly been a stick insect.

Now, though, he felt *tiny* next to Pete, like his body could tell the other teacher was impossibly more bulky than he was, without even looking to compare.

"Sofia...?" Pete frowned. "Sofia, are you...?"

There were other things, too. A slight weight on his head and a tickling on the back of his neck from where his very long, very dark hair now fell past his shoulder blades in a waterfall. A weird, faint feeling on his teeth, like something was stuck to them, like...

With a start, Simon realized he was wearing braces.

What the-?!

Barely had he begun to form the thought when he suddenly became aware how chilly his legs were, and realized it was because he was now wearing a pale pink summer dress that stopped above his knees. He automatically reached up to touch his body and felt the fabric of the dark blue cardigan he'd worn over it.

With a frantic feeling, Simon held his hands out in front of him and saw how small they were, with their slender fingers; dainty wrists leading to skinny, hairless arms; long fingernails painted a goth-y midnight blue.

Oh God... Oh God no!

"Sofia? OK, give her space everyone, I think she needs to..."

His mind whirling, Simon grabbed hold of his face. Felt the soft, smooth skin of his suddenly hairless cheeks. The cheekbones that were already sharper than any man's had a right to be. Ran his fingertips in fright down to his neck and felt how long it was, how slender.

Please!

Then his trembling new hands touched his narrow shoulders, and the whole world seemed to go spinning away into madness.

There, under the fabric of his cardigan and light dress, he could feel the raised bump of two straps, nestled snugly over his shoulders, holding his brand new bra in place...

Continued reading at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)...

Also by Lisa Change

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The Father who Turned into a Teenage Girl

Thirty eight year old Aaron is always clashing with his teenage daughter Ellie, over what she can wear, who she can hang out with. But one day, Ellie accidentally makes a wish that will change both their lives forever. She wishes Aaron **would turn into a teenage girl!**

Trapped as cute fifteen year old Alysha, Aaron must suddenly learn to deal with life as a regular teen girl! Stuck with parents of his own, this grown man is now forced to navigate a life of clothes, shopping, boys, and grownups who just don't understand.

But Ellie's wish comes with a twist. If Aaron doesn't learn to see things from Ellie's perspective *fast* the wish will set, and he'll never be a man again! Can he change back? Or is this adult father doomed to remain young and female... **forever?**

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His New Life as a School Girl

It started with a spell. A spell Natalie thought was a joke, a way to get back at her coworker without hurting anyone. A spell that claimed it could take any grown man... and **turn him into a thirteen year old girl.**

But the spell was no joke. And now her colleague Melvin is being forced to live with the consequences.

Just this morning, Melvin was a 32-year old guy with a fiancée and his own house. Now he's 13-year old Melissa, with a cute face, flowing brown hair, and all the **thoughts and feelings of a teenage girl!** He's back at school. Trying to deal with having parents and a bratty younger sister. Trying to deal with lipstick and crushes and girlfriends.

And the worst part? The spell's erasing his identity. Unless Natalie can find the reverse spell *fast* Melvin will forget who he really is... and become carefree schoolgirl Melissa **permanently.**

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Will Hank get back to being a grownup and a man again? Or is he doomed to spend eternity as an adorable little girl...?

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About the Author

Lisa Change specializes in stories of gender transformation. Her favorite books feature strong men losing their masculinity and becoming weak and submissive women. Among other kinky interests, she's obsessed by forced male pregnancy, feminization, gender swap servitude, men turned into maids, sexual orientation reversal, bimbofication and magical age regression.

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to feel your masculinity slipping away as you slowly transform into a beautiful, obedient woman, these books are for you...

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