

Part Four: Chapter Five



Hercules did not understand what he was feeling. He let down his hair, which he'd been made to put up in a bushy bun ever since he'd begun to serve his sentence as a serving girl. Selene had instructed him to clean off his makeup each night, and he did so gladly. He despised it. He could not so easily remove his feminine fragrance, and the still lingering smell of vanilla and lilacs stung his nose. He hated his woman's dress, his smooth face, his life. And yet, the thought he'd had earlier, the strange longing to be treated like a woman and a not a girl?

He understood his shame at being consigned to work and eat among the little girls well. It was abhorrent. Yes, he did not question that, but what of this strange jealousy he'd felt looking over at the women, wishing against himself that, since he were stuck like this for a year, he wanted to at least be among them and not the children?

Better to be anywhere, he decided, than the bottom of the heap, which is what being treated as a girl-child made him. And yet, could this be some twisted part of Omphale's intent? The woman, he decided, was a fool. He would be so much more use to her as a man, a warrior, a worker. He could raise mighty walls, redirect rivers, slay the most fearsome beasts and foes. Why waste him like this?

Yes, Hercules decided, removing his dress. Ignoring the delicate garment that had been left for him to sleep in, he climbed into bed naked, his great member swaying proudly. Omphale, he decided, was a typical irrational female, ruled by her silly emotions. He would show her the error of her ways.

In the morning, he went to the baths before the women, as he'd been instructed, mildly annoyed he would not enjoy the sight of their wet, naked bodies. He anointed himself in the hated oils, but purposely did a terrible job on his makeup, chuckling to himself with glee.

At work, Hercules bungled and befouled the weaving process, constantly giving too much thread or too little. Minera, who was weaving, grew furious. "I can get nothing done!" She shouted.

Azada came over. Three times, she once more instructed Hercules on how to properly work the spool. "Thank you so much!" Hercules gushed, pretending to play along, but each time she left, he returned to bungling. "I

have had enough with you!" Azada, called over for a fourth time, shouted, her hands on her hips. "You're useless! You do not listen!"

"What is wrong?" Selene asked, coming over.

"This girl is unteachable!" Azada said.

"I beg pardon," Hercules said in the silly manner he'd been instructed. "I am trying so hard, but, look!" He held up his hands. "My big, clumsy hands are not suited to such delicate tasks!"

Selene smiled, suspecting what Hercules was up to. She meant to shame him as she had done before. "So, you choose to remain a little girl, then, since you cannot even perform a task fit for a child?"

"I am so deeply ashamed," Hercules answered, "I would ask you to lower my status further, if there is something less than girl."

Hercules found himself summoned before his queen. "What is this I hear about you refusing to do your work?" Omphale said. "You know I can extend your punishment. Oh, and what a horrid job you did on your face! You are a disgrace to me and my court!"

"I beg your forgiveness, oh, great queen," Hercules responded, "but I would never dare disobey. It's just that I am not gifted with the grace and refinement which is the birthright of every girl. Perhaps I would be better suited to serve you performing tasks suitable to a clumsy oaf."

Omphale laughed. "You will not squirm your way out of that dress so easily, Hera. Very well. Since you are not suited to spool work, I shall have you clean! That will be a worthy task for a girl like you!"

Selene led Hercules to one of the rooms in the queen's palace. There was a bucket and a scrub brush. "Get on your hands and knees and scrub the floor. Perhaps spool work will not seem beneath you at the end of the day."

“Perhaps,” Hercules sang back. As Selene watched, he got on his hands and knees and began to scrub. “I will do my best, Mistress Selene! I just want to be a good girl.”

“The floor better sparkle.” Selene snorted, turned and left.

Hercules smiled.

“What have you done?” Selene screamed when she returned at the end of the day. “You, you, impudent brat!” The floor did not sparkle. In fact, it was smeared brown, and based on the odor, Selene guessed that, somehow, Hercules had spread manure all over the marble.

“Oh, did I do something wrong?” Hercules said. “I’m ever so sorry!”

Once more, Hercules found himself brought before the queen. Her eyes blazed with fury. “How dare you insult me! How dare you smear cow dung on my floors!”

“I am ever so sorry!” Hercules said. “I am so clumsy and mannish!” He didn’t even bother to hide his grin. “I must point out, however, oh, mighty Omphale, that I did what I asked to do to the best of my woeful ability. Surely, there is something I can do to make it up to you? Only this morning as I scrubbed I did hear your guards mention there is a brigand in the forest waylaying travelers. Might I have a word with him for you?”

All week long, the same pattern was repeated. Hercules would be tasked to knit, and he would produce a pile of tangled yarn and a pair of broken knitting needles. He would be tasked to do laundry, and ruin the clothes, each time insisting he had done his best but, oh well, his big hands and lumpy body just weren’t suited to such delicate, female tasks.

Omphale found herself at wits end. She had been expecting to have fun with Hercules, treating him as a girl, but he was so stubborn. It was just as she was about to give up and just let him be him and go about serving her

doing manly tasks, that the Goddess Hera, in disguise as an old woman, came before her.

“I have heard of your travails,” Hera cackled, leaning on her walking stick. “Let me offer you my aid.”

Omphale knew better than to underestimate what appeared to be an old, helpless woman. They always seemed to turn out to be witches. “And what would be the nature of this aid?”

“May I approach? It is better that it be kept secret.”

“Come.”

Hera walked forth, leaned close and whispered in Omphale’s ear. The queen began to laugh, and Hera joined her, the women’s voices echoing throughout the throne room.

That night, Omphale whispered her plan to Selene, who whispered it to another and another. Soon, word had spread to all the serving girls, and throughout the palace. In each case, it was meant with mirth and bright laughter.

The one person who did not hear of the plan, of course, was Hercules, who’d gone to his tent after another day of willful bungling, quite amused with himself. Omphale, he felt, was close to breaking. Soon, his days wearing dresses would come to an end. He was sure of that. “Hahaha,” he laughed, his big, booming laugh, as he removed his makeup. Omphale had been a fool to test him. He was Hercules, and she was only a woman.

The next morning, as he entered the baths, he found Selene waiting for him. “A bright morning to you, Hera,” she sang. “It is so delightful to see you!”

Hercules looked at her askance. She’d been furious with him, taking his defiance as an insult and had had nothing but scorn for him this past week.

Why did she seem so happy? So pleased? “May the sun ever rise on your good fortune,” he sang back, deciding to play along.

Selene put a hand on the small of his back and guided him into the baths. “Clean up, and then Omphale has asked that I show you once more how to do your face. She wants you to look good today.”

“Why especially today?” Hercules asked as he waded into the steaming waters. He was trying to act disinterested, but he was very curious and a bit nervous. The women were clearly up to something, but what?

Selene gleefully painted Hercules’ face. “It’s a shame you have such narrow, cruel lips,” she said. “You would look so much better with big, plump, lips don’t you think?”

“Oh, I couldn’t agree more!” Hercules said. “And big, bright eyes! It’s every girl’s dream!”

Selene patted him on the cheek. “Sometimes, dreams come true. Let’s go. The queen is waiting.”

What did she mean by that? Yet, Hercules dismissed the thought. Just more of her womanly taunting, he decided. Nothing for him to be concerned about.

Hercules felt himself growing more and more nervous as they approached the throne room, but Selene took him by the elbow and turned him aside. “She is waiting in the gallery with everyone else.”

“Everyone else?” Hercules’ felt his anxiety grow. What does she mean to do? But, then he once more laughed away his concern. What could she do to him? He was Hercules, son of Zeus, a demi-god!

Hercules found himself standing in the center of the great room, all the members of the palace gathered around him. The serving girls, surprisingly, had a place of honor, a perfect vantage point to watch, and he

noticed with some dismay the artists had also been gathered with their easels. Still, he felt his usual arrogance, that is, until Omphale entered the room.

The look in Omphale's eyes? It was terrifying. He realized he'd pushed her too far. When would he learn not to drive a woman to such a rage? Hoping it wasn't too late to save himself, he knelt and dropped his head.

"Stand," Omphale commanded. "Remove your dress."

Hercules stood, amused. Did she think making him stand naked before the palace would shame him? Aside from his smooth, hairless skin, he had nothing to be embarrassed about. The ladies of the palace would soon know the rumors were true. Hercules slipped out of his dress, and stood naked, he thrust his hips forward, his member bouncing, and the room echoed with sighs.

Omphale, herself, couldn't help but take a glance, but instead of looking impressed or aroused, she smirked. Then, she nodded. One of her servants walked up to Hercules with a bottle on a pillow. Inside, a clear liquid like water.

"Dearest Hera. I have given much thought to your problem, how your big, clumsy man-hands prevent you from performing your tasks. I have found a solution. Drink."

Man hands? Solution? Hercules eyed the potion suspiciously. Whatever it was, he did not desire to find out. "My queen," he said. "I beg your forgiveness for my defiance. I—"

"Drink," Omphale repeated, her eyes bright with gleeful malice.

Hercules drank. He began to change.



Chapter Six



As they reached Cygnus' room, the big man put his hands on Hercules' hips, opened the door and, hands still firmly on Hercules' hips, steered the slender girl he'd become forward. Moved about by the man so effortlessly, Hercules felt small, weak, helpless, and his little heart raced as he fretted over Cygnus'

intentions, remembering the feeling of the man's hands pawing at his soft body. Surely, he can't mean to? He wouldn't! Hercules told himself. He simply refused to believe it.

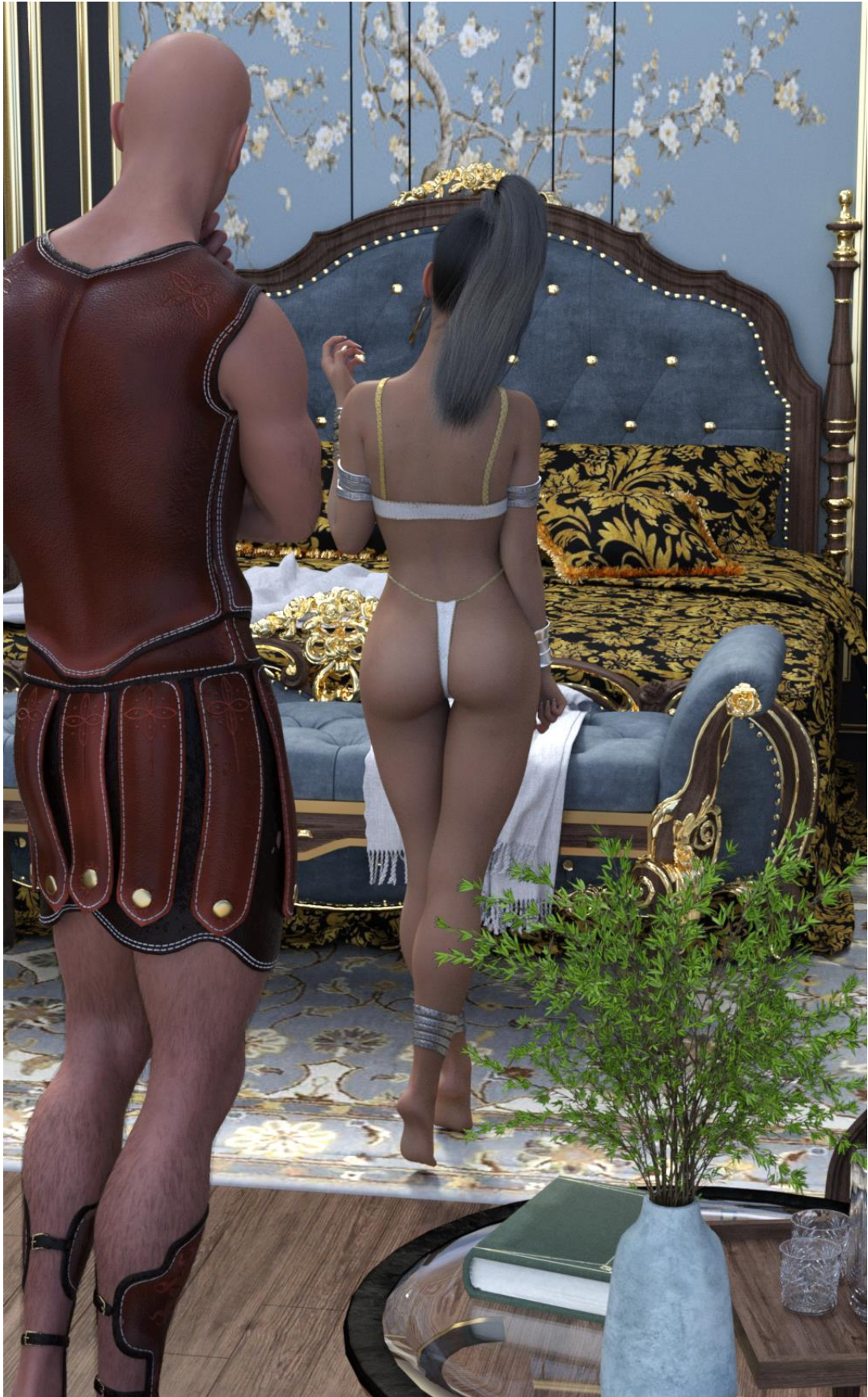
Cygnus dug one hand into Hercules' hair, and with the other he held Hercules' slender wrist, pressing himself against the feminized man's back. "You are quite changed for the better," Cygnus said, his deep voice rife with meaning. "Your hair is so soft. Your skin is so soft, and you smell most pleasing, as a woman should." He began to smell Hercules' hair, his neck. He blew in Hercules' ear.

Hercules tried to pull away, the feeling of Cygnus up against him, over him, unnerving him, scaring him even. Cygnus pulled him back, chuckling. "Linger a moment. I must drink in your scent. I must get to know you, dear friend. You are so different."

Hercules looked back and up at the man, eyes wide. "You are different as well," he said. "I recalled you a noble man, with good manners."

Cygnus laughed. "You even talk like a woman now." He ran a hand over the crescent of Hercules' soft hip. "Go. Rest you on the divan. You must be tired after your lovely dancing."

As Hercules, relieved to be free of the man's grasp, walked toward the divan. His relief was short lived, as he could sense the man caressing his back with his eyes. Cygnus whistled. "You have as pleasing and graceful a walk as any maid I have seen in all my travels!" Indeed, the hours and hours Hercules had spent refining his walk hoping to impress the other girls had ingrained in him a sweetly feminine gait, his wide hips swaying invitingly. "And you have an ass like a prize mare."



Hercules chose to ignore the comment, but his rage was building. His time living as a woman, the trials he'd been subjected to, they had taken their toll. He'd grown meek, shy, unsure. Once he would not have tolerated any of this. He'd have risked death rather than let another man, or even a God treat him so. Now, though? He didn't know what to say or do other than to put up with it. He was only a serving girl, after all. Cygnus was a man.

Cygnus took off his chest piece and threw it on the floor. The serving girl Hercules had become seethed with irritation. Someone would have to pick that up. "Feel free to remove your top as well," Cygnus said with a wicked grin. Hercules just slit his eyes at the man. It would be pleasant day in Hades before he showed Cygnus his breasts!

Hercules sat. Cygnus sat, very close, and put a hand on Hercules' thigh. Hercules removed his hand and scooted away in retreat. Cygnus advanced. Hercules no longer doubted Cygnus' intentions, could no longer convince himself that his former rival, drinking buddy and friend, the man he'd fought and drank with, gone whoring with, wanted to take this soft body of his, to use him as a woman. "Cygnus," he whispered. "Please. No."

The soft appeal in Hercules' voice seemed to make Cygnus' eyes burn even more intensely with desire. He cupped Hercules' face, and said, "I must taste those sweet lips."

He'd had enough and summoned all the resolve he had remaining in his maiden's heart. He slapped Cygnus on the face and screamed, "Enough! I will not lay with you!" It made him feel powerful that slap, and for a moment he forgot about his woman's body, his woman's life. He felt almost a man again, but then—



Cygnus, recoiling from the blow fell backwards off the couch with a loud THUNK. He rolled onto his belly, groaning in agony. “Mah aw. I ink ooh oke mah aw.”

“Athena!” Hercules gasped, his moment of triumph transformed into feminine horror and concern. He knelt down next to Cygnus. “I am so sorry!” He gushed. “Let me get you some water. Some wine? Are you sure it’s broken, I wouldn’t think I could... I mean, look at me, I’m just a girl! It’s maybe just bruised or something, I...” but Hercules’ feminine gushing was cut off by the booming sound of a mocking, masculine laugh.

“Hahahahaha!” Cygnus rolled over, grinning, laughing, pointing at Hercules. “You fell fool so easily! You are most gullible now that you are a woman.”

“And you are as much an idiot as ever!” Hercules huffed. He turned his back on Cygnus, crossing his arms under his breath. Then, remembering Cygnus’ comment about his rump, he dropped one arm across it. “And don’t ogle me!”

“Oh, don’t be such a baby,” Cygnus said. “Come. Let’s have some wine.”

“Hmmpf!” Hercules put his nose in the air. “If you insist I stay, then I will not speak to you at all.”

“Oh, Hercules. Come. Have some wine.”

“Hmmpf!”

“It’s just kidding between old friends.”

“Hmmpf!”

“Very well,” Cygnus said, chuckling. “Would you forgive, young miss, if I were to offer to share a secret with you?”

A secret? Hercules turned, his eyes dancing with joy. He loved secrets!

