

Boo!

The end of his relationship.
The beginning of his

Nightmare



Zach woke to his phone buzzing against his belly. His head pounded, a reminder of another night and one round too many. Bleary, he looked around, relieved to see that she was still gone— Anna. What a bitch and six months of hell. He was glad he'd finally got rid of her, though she lingered. The pillow smelled of her perfume, and the room smelled of salty, stale sex. He fished around, grabbed his phone and rolled onto his back, squinting as he tried to read the text without his glasses.

Boo! The text read.

Source? Unknown Caller.

He tossed the phone down, annoyed that it had woke him up for nothing, but once awake, he couldn't get back to sleep, instead tossing, turning, folding up his pillow, flattening it. None of it worked.

He needed a drink. He got up, and seeing his clothes scattered on the floor from the night before, he grabbed his t-shirt and sniffed. It passed the test, and he pulled it on, then his jeans. Looking around, he saw reminders of Anna everywhere— her makeup strewn across the dresser, a half open drawer overflowing with her clothes, a framed picture of the two of them at Niagara Falls, wearing Maid of the Mist ponchos, laughing.



I knew I should have made her take her stuff when she left, he thought, going to the bathroom, splashing cold water on his face, and then—

“Boo!”

Anna. Eyes smeared with dark mascara. Reaching toward him her nails like talons, as if she meant to scratch the hell out of him.

Zach shouted in fright, spinning and seeing— nothing.

“What the fuck?” Zach said, his voice echoing off the bathroom tile, heart racing as he looked around, turned around. It had seemed so real. He even smelled her perfume hanging in the air like she’d just walked past.

Just a hallucination. Had he done shrooms last night? He couldn’t remember. What he did know for sure was that he most certainly needed a drink.

Heading toward the door, without even thinking, Zach grabbed his purse and slung it over his shoulder. Just as he was reaching for the handle, he became aware of the feeling of the strap, and looking down saw the bag— Anna’s purse, laying against his hip. He blushed, confused, and tossed the purse across the room. “What the fuck is wrong with me?”

The purse had landed in the corner, right under a lamp, a halo of golden light shining down on it. It almost looked like it was smiling at him. “Fuck you,” Zach said, flipping it the bird.

Zach pushed open the door to Wings and Stuff Sports Bar, relieved to escape the bright, sun baked streets and head into the cool shadows. Seeing him come stumbling in, Harvey, the bartender, poured a couple fingers of Kentucky Bourbon into a rocks glass and slid it across the bar,

the angular glass of dark whiskey coming to a halt right in front of Zach's favorite stool.

"What's up?" Harvey said.

"I can't complain."

"Not that I'd give a shit."

They both chuckled. Zach sniffed the air. He could still smell Anna's perfume. It smelled like it was all over him. Fuck. It must've been on the bed sheets or some shit.

Zach sipped the smokey whiskey and felt it burn right down his throat. Yes, indeed. He loved a good whiskey. Looking up at the TV, he let his mind glaze over-- the volume was off, but the closed captions were on, a couple scrawny guys arguing about a sport neither one of them had ever played.

A hand gripped his wrist, crushing it like a vise.



“Fuck.” Zach looked up to see Harvey had grabbed his wrist, and was now staring at him, eyes gleaming, pupils like saucers. “Dude,” Zach said, trying to pull his arm free. Harvey kept squeezing, squeezing, digging his long black nails into Zach’s flesh, and then, suddenly, it was not Harvey but Anna, her eyes brimming with malevolent madness: “Boo!”

Zach made a tight, high-pitched yelp and almost fell off his stool and— Harvey was 5 feet away, polishing a glass, looking at him like he’d gone nuts. “You okay?”

Zach shook his head. Turned, looking around and around for Anna. She’d been here. He’d seen her, felt her. And yet— nothing. Empty booths, chairs still stacked on top of tables.

“Yeah. Shit. I don’t know. I thought I saw someone.”

“Maybe you should lay off the hooch,” Harvey said, raising an eyebrow. Not that it concerned him at all if a customer was an alcoholic. Drunks kept him in business, but when people started to get nuts, he didn’t want them around.

“If I lay off this shit, I’ll die,” Zach said, not entirely sure if he was joking. He’d decided to take a day off a little while back and by dinner time his hands had been shaking as he stumbled into the liquor store. He sat back down, crossed his thighs, squirming a little as they crushed his junk, then gulped down a mouthful of whiskey, immediately coughing, pounding his chest. “What the hell is that?”

“Your usual,” Harvey said, thinking, he must be broken up over the breakup. Poor guy. “Smoked whiskey.”

Zach, still choking, looked at the brown liquor in his glass, the bottle still resting on the bar. It was his usual, but it seemed so— harsh? “Fucking A,” Zach said, taking another sip, fighting the urge to puke. It was his usual

shit, but goddamn it tasted awful. Still, he forced himself to drink. He was not one to ever waste a drop of whiskey.

“Anna was in here a couple nights ago,” Harvey said. “I’d never seen her happier. Kinda weird. Like, crazy happy. It’s pretty surprising she--”

“I really don’t want to talk about her,” Zach said. “Crazy bitch.”

“No. Yeah. I get it.”

It had only been a little after 11 in the morning when Zach first came into the bar, and so for a time he drank in peace, the booze, disgusting as it was, filling his head, easing the pain of his hangover. As he drank, the lunch crowd started to file in, small groups from nearby offices, and the hubbub of their chatter made Zach’s head pound. He was thinking of leaving, when one of the office girls walked up to him. Zach smiled. He was a good-looking guy, and women in the city were pretty forward. He was used to women coming up to him.

“Can you tell me what time it is?” The woman asked with a smile and a toss of her hair.

Zach was just about to respond, “time for me to get your number,” when the woman tilted her head to the side, and suddenly she was Anna, barring her teeth as if she were about to gnaw on his face. “Boo!”

Zach yelped and recoiled. He felt a pair of icy hands on his back. They slipped around his ribcage, and then he felt frigid fingers dig into, pinch and twist his nipples. Zach raised his arms and arched his back in shock, once more making that small, high-pitched yelp. Zach fell off his stool, crashing to the floor. Hyper-ventilating, he raised his arms defensively. “Get away from me.”

The scene shifted back to normal, the woman staring at Zach, shaking her head. “What a freak,” she said, walking away.

“What happened?” One of her friends asked.

“I don’t know. He’s just some kind of nutjob.”

However much the vision of Anna and the icy hands may have seemed like a hallucination, Zach’s nipples hurt, bad. He got back to his feet and wrapped his arms around his chest but-- his head snapped around, his mouth dropping open as he looked left, right, left...

Anna’s laughing face appeared in every mirror. The windows. The jukebox. She crawled along the ceiling, rose up out of the floor. Anna... Anna screaming, jeering, cackling...



Anna was suddenly everywhere, eyes gleaming with hate and malice. She climbed out of the bar, from the floor, the walls, screaming, screaming, screaming in a voice like a furious murder of crows...

Run, his mind screamed. Run! He fell backwards, once more hitting the ground, hard, his head bouncing off the floor. The screaming stopped. Anna was gone. Zach climbed woozily to his feet, stars flashing in his eyes.

"I'm outta here," he said, reaching into his pocket, then another. Fuck. No wallet? "Hey," he said. "Put it on my tab? I forgot my wallet."

"Maybe it's in your purse?" Harvey said with a smirk.



"My what?" Zach followed Harvey's eyes. There it was: Anna's purse, sitting on the bar. It was the same purse he'd started to take with him. He'd left it back at the apartment, though. He was sure of it. "That's not mine," he said, glassy eyed, still twitching, stressed, worried Anna would appear again, worried word would get around that he'd shown up at the bar with a purse. "You know I'm not a purse guy." He tried to laugh, but it sounded forced, phony.

"I'm pretty sure I saw you bring it in with you," Harvey said, chuckling. "Hey, I'm not judging you, bro."

"Put it on my tab," he repeated, looking toward the door, wanting to run, to hide, but he suddenly felt a desperate need to take a leak, like if he didn't in the next two minutes, he would piss his pants.

He started toward the bathroom.

“I thought you had to leave?”

“I gotta drain the lizard,” Zach said, and he reached for his purse, then froze.

There were some hot girls in the bar. He couldn't let them see him carrying a purse, and yet, he felt a powerful force drawing him to Anna's bag, making him want to take it, keep it, wear it. He couldn't leave his purse— her purse— unattended. Someone might steal it.

He felt the pressure building in his belly, the need to urinate growing stronger, imperative, like he might piss himself right then and there if he didn't go.

“Boo!” He heard Anna whisper in his ear. He spun, and she stood there grinning, even as a hundred other Annas began to crawl out of the mirrors, circling him, “boo... boo... BOO!”

The Anna's began to dart in, stabbing at his aching nipples with jagged fingers. It hurt, and Zach began to feebly bat at their hands. “Stop it! Stop!” They began to pinch his ass, and he jumped in pain, spinning, haplessly slapping at their cruel hands. “Stop it! Stop it!”

Zach reeled, terrified, confused, and then one of the Anna's stepped in close and hissed, “claim your purse and this all stops!”

Desperate for the nightmare to end he grabbed the purse and clutched it to his chest. The Anna's vanished. Everyone in the bar was staring at him. Suddenly the jukebox sprung to life—

I shoulda been gone

After all your words of steel



Harvey might have made a joke about Zach now grabbing the purse he'd said wasn't his, but he was becoming increasingly concerned about Zach's sanity. "Dude, you should probably get the fuck out of here."

"It's Anna," Zach said, panting, sweating, eyes darting around the bar in terror. "She's doing this to me."

"Dude, that is not fucking funny. I know you two had a bad break up, but don't disrespect the dead."

“Dead? No. She’s here. She’s everywhere. She’s stalking me, trying to drive me insane...”

“Dude, get the fuck out of my bar.”

Zach barely registered Harvey’s comment. His heart pounded in his chest, loud like a bass drum as he looked around for any sign of Anna. He thought he heard a couple of the women laugh, a pair of bottle blondes, and he hunched over, seething with shame. His need to pee grew more intense, and he ran toward the toilets.

Zach burst through the door to the bathroom, feeling a tiny trickle of pee leak down the inside of his leg. He slammed open the door to one of the stalls, shoved his pants down and sat, squirming at how cold the seat felt, but gasping in relief as he let loose, peeing in spurts.

Anna’s face appeared, floating in front of him inside the surface of the stainless-steel stall door.

“What the fuck is going on?” Zach said. As much as it seemed impossible, he knew this was Anna, or her spirit, somehow here, there everywhere. Anna just laughed, her face fading away. “Why are you doing this to me?”

“You got this all messed up in that scattered little brain of yours. I’m doing this for you, babe, because I love you soooo much.”

“Bullshit.”

“Oh, such vulgar language.” Anna faded away in a cloud of laughter.

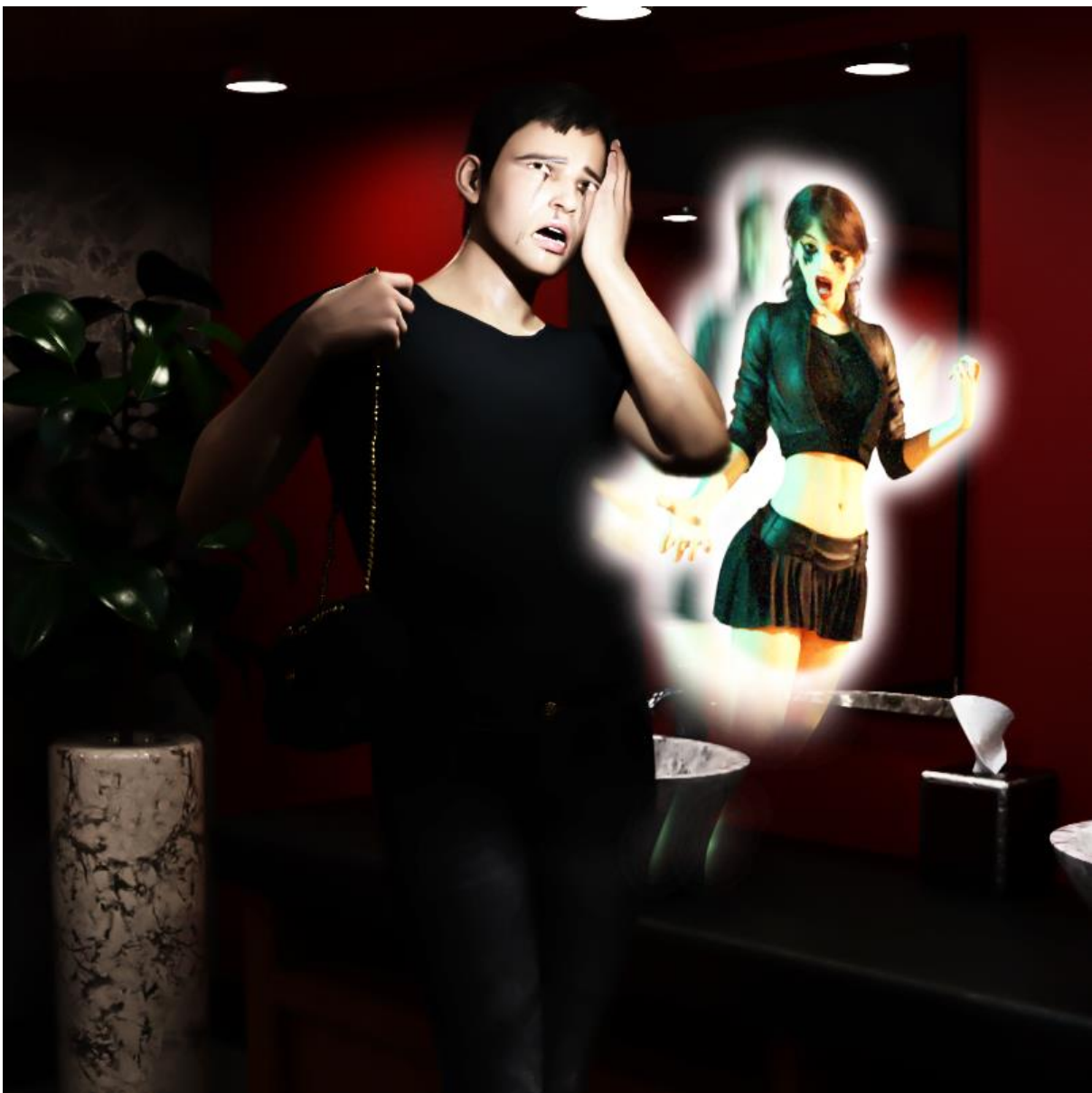
Zach pulled off a few squares of toilet paper, wadded them up and wiped himself— then, he realized what he’d done.

The world spun, tilted, and Zach stood, disgusted with himself. Squatting like a bitch? What the hell? His head swam and he fell against the side of the stall, dizzy, weak. Too much booze, he decided, grabbing the strap of

his purse, he slipped it over his shoulder. At the bathroom mirror he checked his face, and he looked terrible, the skin under his eyes puffy, black circles, unshaven. He wondered if Anna has any concealer in her purse, and unclasped it, then—

“Boo!”

Zach screamed as Anna once more appeared in the mirror, slipped her arms around his chest and pinched his swollen, aching nipples. Spinning,



Zach fell to the floor. "Stop!" He screamed again, his voice tight, rising to a higher register. In a moment of true terror and horror, he felt his eyes stinging, like he was about to cry. "Leave me alone!"

Looking around, saw nothing. He climbed to his feet, glanced back in the mirror. His chest ached, his nipples tingled. "Ahhh!" He felt Anna pinch his ass again, spun, flailing, and the stress had finally overwhelmed him, and he started to cry.

Just then, he heard women's voices, the door to the restroom opened, he saw the sign on the door, a female figure in a skirt.

"You lost?" One of the women said, looking at him in disgust.

"Pervert," the other added.

"Oh, shit," Zach said, looking away, disgusted with himself for crying, humiliated these females would see him in tears. "I'm so sorry. I must've..." He grabbed his purse. "I'll go."

The woman parted to let Zach pass, shaking their heads in confusion.

Zach threw himself onto his bed, hugged a pillow and tried to sleep, but it was no use. Images of Anna, the stinging pain of her pinching him, haunted him. The memories of his own weird behavior, people at the bar laughing at him. His mind raced. “On top of all that,” he thought, rolling onto his back and placing his palms over his tender chest, “my fucking nipples are killing me.”

Of course, he remembered how he’d cruelly twisted Anna’s nipples, pinching them hard, not for her pleasure, but to inflict pain, to make her suffer. Once they gotten sick of each other, he’d decided to make her break up with him, and he’d started with hate fucking, making her miserable. He’d gaslit her, playing endless mind games, making her feel insecure, making her feel crazy. He never thought it would end the way it did.

He couldn’t sleep, needed to clear his head, to sweat out the booze, so he decided to go for a run, stripped out of his clothes, grabbed his running gear and froze, staring at one of Anna’s sports bras, half hanging out of the dresser. Once more touching his aching chest, the thought came, unbidden— maybe I should wear a bra? The way the bra was hanging, it almost looked like it was smiling at him. He reached toward it, fingers trembling...yes, he thought. It would feel so good, so comfortable, and it was such a pretty powder blue...

“Fucking hell.” He turned away, only to find himself inches from Anna, staring into her dark, dead eyes. “God damn it!” She stepped right through him then, and he felt the heat drain from his body, his skin tighten and grow ice cold. He fell to the floor at her feet. Trembling, he tilted his head back and back to looked up the towering length of her strong legs to her leering

eyes. He looked up at her. She looked down at him, that same mocking smirk plastered on her face. “Shame, shame,” she said, and then faded away. “Put on your bra, babe.”



“Fuck you!” Zach shouted. “Fuck you to hell! I’m not wearing a fucking bra!” Like hell he would wear a bra. He pulled on a t-shirt, a pair of baggy running shorts. Tied on his shoes. “Fuck the hell off,” he shouted at the sky, thinking Anna would hear.

He went to the door and pulled it open, took one step out into the hall, and then found himself gripped with terror. There was a man at the end of the hall, Mark, his

neighbor, and Mark looked at him, and then Mark’s eyes dropped to Zach’s

chest. Zack covered his chest, feeling suddenly self-conscious, bashful like he was a 12-year-old girl just getting her breasts. Mark was looking at him strangely now, took a step toward Zach, and Zach's heart pounded, he



started to breath more heavily, thinking, "he wants to hurt me."

He felt like he was shrinking, the world growing larger, darker, he thought he heard Anna laughing, and gripped with an all-consuming fear, he retreated back into his apartment, panting, chest heaving, heart racing. He slammed the door.

A panic attack washed over Zach. His apartment now seemed full of threatening shadows, hidden dangers... was there a man hiding in his closet.? Was his gas

stove about to explode? He glanced warily at his laptop, the camera above the screen. There was a pervert somewhere who'd hacked his camera, watching him. He was sure of it.

No!

There!

Zach gasped. There **was** a man in the closet, the cold steel blade of a knife glittering in his hand... backing away, Zach saw a man at his window, on the fire escape, pounding on the glass, while another slithered from under his bed like a serpent, and then the leering face of a man licking his lips as flickered to life on the screen of Zach's laptop. Zach was surrounded, and he sank to his knees in terror. Tears began to roll down his cheeks.

"If you want this to end," Anna's voice called out, seeming to echo around the room, coming from everywhere and nowhere all at once. "Beg me to make you a woman."

"No..." Zach whispered, his voice now softer, higher than before. The menacing males all froze, and he heard once more Anna's chilling laugh.

She lay there on his bed now, staring at him, eyes dancing with malice.

Shrank backward, trembling with fear, he shook his head, side to side. All thoughts of confronting her fled from his mind, and he whispered, "Get out. Leave me alone."

Anna flickered, disappeared, the room flickered. Now she stood next to the bed.

Flicker. She'd moved closer.

Flicker. Closer, like they were under a strobe light, and suddenly she was right in front of him, grabbing a hank of his hair, yanking, hard, pulling his head back. "Your fear...." she whispered... "it's delicious..." and then she licked him on the cheek.

Zach screamed. He desperately wanted to run, to hide, but he couldn't move— frozen, staring into her dark, hateful eyes. “Beg me to turn you into a woman, and the terror ends.”

“What? A woman? No. You're insane.”

“You made me this way. Now, beg.”

“No...” Zach whispered, feeling almost as if he could feel his balls withering, pulling up inside him. “No!”

“Beg me to turn you into a woman,” Anna hissed, now gripping his chin, her long, ragged nails digging into his flesh. “A mousy, scared little female. You will always feel insecure, neurotic, and the only thing that will help is if you make yourself pretty. You will show the world you are helpless, non-threatening, feminine. The way you walk, talk— dress. Yet, you will never feel truly safe— unless you have a man around to protect you.”

Anna vanished, but the shadowy figures of the men now began to converge on Zach, their eyes glowing with lust as they whispered... “hot little bitch... Fine piece of ass... fuck the hell out of her...”

Zach couldn't deal with the terror. “Yes,” he screamed. “Yes.” Then, his world went black.

Part 2



Zach woke on the floor, shivering. He pushed himself up, and bangs fell across his eyes. His chest shifted, swayed. Pushing the hair from his face, he looked down to confirm he had breasts now. Big, firm breasts that swayed with his every movement. He climbed to his feet and stared in horror at his hand, his wrists... they were not his. He now had slender

wrists, small, soft hands... a woman's hands. He had to know. He slipped both hands between his legs, his arms pressing his breasts—they felt huge—together, and then he lay his fingers on the soft swelling of his mound. There was no doubt he was a woman now.

He went to the mirror. He was smaller— other than his huge tits, his body slender, like a woman's, with lithe, round little arms... the curve of hips flaring out from a narrow waist, and his face. He touched his cheek. His



eyes were bigger, his lips plump, while his nose had gotten smaller, cuter... he was pretty, with long hair that now came down to his shoulders. He pushed the hair back and struggled to hold back tears of shame.

He heard a groan from the closet and gasped, stepping back. He didn't see anything, anyone, and part of him wanted to go, look, prove to himself there was nothing to be afraid of, but he was too terrified to even look, to confirm there wasn't some man in there, waiting to hurt him. He wished he had a man there, a man to protect him. With a shout, he ran to the closet and pushed the door shut, then hurried to the window to make sure it was locked. He turned and turned, heart racing. He didn't feel safe. He was so scared...

Scanning the room, his eyes locked on his— Anna's bras, hanging out from the drawer, then on her makeup, scattered across the dresser. They looked safe, warm, inviting... he wondered if they would fit, though. He had much bigger breasts now. He stepped toward the bra drawer, longing for the comfort, the modesty they could provide him...

"No... no... no.." he whispered, cringing at the sound of his light, breathy woman's voice, but even as he refused to slip into a bra, he found himself walking toward the dresser, picking up a tube of creamy foundation. He sighed. The sweet smelling tube of foundation felt as powerful as a Colt .45. Just holding it made him feel safer, more brave. "Yes."

He had no choice. He didn't want to be scared anymore. He used a barrette to pin his hair back, away from his heart-shaped face. Zach knew, somehow, he didn't even question it, how to do his face, and as he applied the foundation, then mascara, lipstick and blush, he felt himself calming, growing more at ease.

When he was done, he looked at his pretty face, his glossy lips, mascara drenched lashes, and sighed with relief. Somewhere inside his mind, the man he'd been recoiled in horror, seethed with rage for what Anna was making of him, but he was afraid, nervous, anxious, and **she**, the woman Anna was making of him, was at least calm when she made herself pretty.

He hooked his hair behind his ear, and then froze, staring not so much at his slender fingers, but his fingernails. His eyes fell to a package of press on nails. They were pretty, and he needed them, but he started to step away, to fight this latest impulse to feminize himself. As soon as he stepped away, he thought he heard a noise in the closet, thought he heard the doorknob on his front door begin to turn, a grinding, metallic noise, and then a pounding on the door...he began to hyperventilate, chest heaving, his heart raced, he could hear it pounding in his ears. Pounding...pounding...

He grabbed the package of press on nails and tore them open. As he applied each nail, his heart rate slowed, his breathing grew shallow, and when he finally looked on his taloned hands, the long nails making his slender fingers look more grateful, he once more felt calm, secure.

At last, Zach dug through his bra drawer, finding himself drawn not to the practical sports bras he'd refused earlier, but a sexy bra with lace cups. He cringed at the thought of wearing it, but he had no choice, and he turned it around, fixed the hooks, then used the bra straps to pull it up until the cups lifted and hugged his breasts. He let the stretchy bra straps snap against his shoulders, and began tugging and adjusting his bra, fitting his breasts into the cups, pulling the bottom out so it wasn't cutting across the soft curve of his under boobs.



He looked down to see the bra lifted and pressed his breasts together, enhancing the rounding swell of his cleavage, and the man he'd been felt slightly aroused at the sight of those sweet, soft breasts in those lace cups, even as he, careful not to break a nail, once more slipped a thumb under a bra strap and pulled it higher on his little shoulder.

Feeling the strap across his back, the way the bra hugged and supported him, he felt more comfortable, more secure. He cupped his

breasts, the stiff ridges of the bra against his soft palms and squeezed. Yes. It felt right: the weight of his breasts, secured in the firm cups of his bra— they completed him somehow, made him feel— normal.

He looked around his little apartment, eyes wide. What now? He wondered.

Anna answered, laughing, the line filled with static.

“Tell me what to do,” Zach said, wanting, needing someone to make his decisions for him.

“Go to the bar and find yourself a man.”

The bar? Alone? He didn't feel comfortable going anywhere alone, and especially not at night. “I'm scared,” Zach admitted.

“Do you want me to come with? I can be your wing girl,” Anna said. Then, she waited.

Anna? She was the one who did this to him. He hated her. She was a psycho. “How?” Zach asked in his breathy, sexy new voice. “You're— you're dead?”

“I'll be there as a ghost,” Anna said. “You really are a dumb blonde now.” She watched as Zach bit his lip, struggling to make a decision.

“Whatever you think is best,” Zach whispered.

“Get dressed. I'll be there in 30 minutes. Don't keep me waiting,” Anna said. Click.

Trembling, Zach went to his closet. He remembered the big, scary man he'd seen in there, the gleaming knife. His heart raced, but he fought through the fear and yanked the door open, squeaking in fright and cowering away, but there was no man, only a line of dresses. Zach frowned. Dresses. Yes. He would be wearing dresses now. Skirts. He was a woman. He didn't have much time to fuss over what to wear. His eyes fell

on a little black dress, just the kind he would have loved to see a woman wear, and he slipped it off its hanger. Stepping into the dress, he pulled it up, slipping the straps over his shoulders. The dress seemed about two sizes too small, but it was made of some kind of stretchy material and now hugged his body, what little it covered, making him feel like a sausage. The dress had a plunging neckline, and his tits spilled out the top, threatening to pop free at any moment: that was another thing he'd loved to see as a man, and his mind swam with shame and confusion as he glanced in the mirror and confront the fact that he was now the hot girl, the one with a great rack.

A bracelet. An anklet. A slender chain that nestled in his soft cleavage, gleaming, begging for attention. He spritzed some perfume on his wrists, his neck, between his breasts. Once more looking in the mirror, the man he'd been wanted to cry, but he didn't want to ruin his makeup.

Anna materialized and gave him a once over. "Booo..." she drawled, nodding her approval. "You make one fine ass bitch," she said.

Zach forced a smile. "Okay?"

It all seemed so surreal as Zack walked into the bar, purse slung over his shoulder, heels clicking, hips swaying side to side. He sensed eyes drawn to him, the hungry, curious eyes of men, caressing his body, and he blushed, smiling, trying to hide how ashamed he felt.

"So many hot guys here tonight, honey," Anna whispered in his ear, a frigid hand on his back.



Zach didn't answer. He'd resolved himself to this course of action, that he would have to find a man. He just felt so scared without one. So gross. What would the other girls think of him, and, besides, his mother was always bothering him about giving her grand kids. He perched himself on a stool, legs crossed, shoulders back, breasts out, his mind awirl with feminine anxiety: what if some gross guy hits on me? What if no one hits on

me and I just sit here all night like some pathetic hag? What if the perfect man hits on me but I blow it because I'm such a spazz?

Zach didn't even know what to do with any of these new feelings, and in less than a minute, a grinning guy with spikey hair walked up, a suit and tie, but Zach spotted right away the man's Rolex was a fake. "Let me buy you a drink," the phony said, pulling a billfold out of his pocket, a 100-dollar bill conspicuously on the outside.

Zach, remembering how girls reacted when he hit on them, smiled and hooked his hair behind his ear. "Sure." *Like you have a chance in hell*, Zach thought, but he wanted a drink, and he was curious to see what other guys would do to separate him from this loser. Zach needed a man, a real man, one who would protect him. He glanced at Anna. She grinned, like a hungry shark.

It took almost an hour, but finally HE stepped in. Tall, broad shouldered with a chin like a battering ram and a long, lean frame draped in a \$5000 suit, Rex was the real deal. Zach wasn't even sure how he did it, but somehow he made all the other guys scatter, and then it was just Zach, staring into Rex' big, brown eyes, playing with his hair, giggling. They were touching, flirting, connecting. It was obvious Rex was about to invite Zach back to his place.

Zach glanced at the Miller Light clock behind the bar. It was about to strike midnight. His eyes went wide. Tex patted him on his smooth, bare thigh. "Let's finish this party at my place," he said. "I want to show you my record collection."

Terrified, ashamed, Zach put a hand to his cheek and tilted his head to the side, a nervous smile on his plump, glossy lips. He was supposed to be a man, the man, and he knew, somehow, that if he went down this path, he

was done, finished, he would be stuck as this insecure, neurotic woman forever. He thought about grabbing his purse, making an excuse, running for the door, but then he glanced at Anna.

She slit her eyes and grinned. He knew the hell that awaited him if he defied her.

“You look so nervous,” the man said, now touching Zack on his soft arm, caressing it. “Come on. Let’s go. It’ll be fun.”

Zach glanced back at Anna, who nodded toward the door.

“Look, even your friend is giving you the green light.”

Zach slipped his purse strap over his shoulder. He offered his small, soft hand to Rex. “I’d love to.”

Rex took Zach’s hand in his, helped him to his feet and then slipped an arm around his waist, the two of them heading out into the night, side by side. Zach felt like what he was—a prize catch, a hot girl who’d been won over by a stud. His mind raced. He knew what was coming. He was going to give himself to this man; he was going to let another man make love to him.



The thought terrified him, but the thought of what Anna would do terrified him even more. When they got to Rex' Maserati, Rex opened the door for Zach, put a hand on the small of his back as Zach got into the car, looking up, offering hid man an appreciative smile, because he knew that was expected of him now that he was a woman.

Six Months Later



Zach sat up, eyes wide, heart racing. He thought he'd heard a noise. Terrified, he prodded the snoring man lying next to him. "Rex!" He whispered. "Rex!"

"Yeah?' Rex said, voice bleary with sleep.

"I heard a noise!" Zach pulled the covers up to his chin.

"I'll check it out," Rex said, rolling out of bed, rubbing his eyes, grabbing the baseball bat he kept next to the bed. "You just stay here," Rex said, giving Zach a peck on the cheek. Zach could tell his husband was a little

annoyed with him, but it was sweet he at least tried to hide it. He was so protective.

Watching his man head out the bedroom door, Zach felt like one lucky girl to have such a strong man for a husband. Yet, he was also ashamed he'd become such a weak, frightened female. A wife. Rex was talking about starting a family, and Zach did not want to be a mom, but, well, it kinda came with the territory. He supposed he would get used to it, just like he'd gotten used to doing his wifely duty and keeping his husband satisfied.

He thought, as he did from time to time, about trying to find someone to break the spell, to free him from his feminine prison. It occurred to him now and then. Maybe there was a way out of this, some kind of sorcerer or something. He could--

"Now, now," he heard a voice whisper, and he gasped as he saw Anna appear at the foot of his bed, hands like claws.

"Sorry," he whispered, scared of what she might do to him. "I'm sorry."

Anna laughed as her image faded away.

Zach hugged his knees to his chest. No. Maybe being a woman hadn't been a part of his life's plan, but it was better than being afraid.