

VERDE'S DOOHICKEY



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GO!

NATALIE NEUMANN

Verde's Doohickey
By Natalie Neumann



Verde's Doohickey
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Content Warning: *Verde's Doohickey* contains content that some readers might find disturbing, triggering or uncomfortable. This includes masturbation and nudity, strong language, domestic violence, and violence against children. Reader discretion is advised.

First published: August 15, 2015
Revision: September 2022
www.Natalie.TF

Verde's Doohickey follows Jad Novus and his group of intrepid teenage friends who find themselves in possession of a mysterious body switching device from an enigmatic individual known as Verde Dusk. With this incredible power at their disposal, they set off on a low-key adventure about friendship, anxiety, the alteration and rewriting of reality, and other miscellaneous teenage shenanigans.

Verde's Doohickey is the first part of *The Saga of Dawn and Dusk* series created by Natalie Neumann. No prerequisite reading is needed to fully understand this story.

Verde's Doohickey was originally released on August 15, 2015. Since then it has been revised repeatedly. Typographical errors and grammatical mistakes have been corrected, certain sections have been rewritten for quality purposes, the formatting of the novel has been changed, and minor aspects of the story have been altered.

Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra is an alternate universe continuation of *Verde's Doohickey*. Six months after coming into possession of a mysterious body switching device— the VD— Jad Novus and friends have learned much about themselves and their friends through their regular body swap adventures. However, these playful days come to an end as the VD suddenly breaks, swapping around their bodies one final time. With no means of ever returning to 'normal' they accept these new bodies as their own and begin their new lives.

Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra was released on September 6, 2022, over seven years after the original August 15, 2015 release of *Verde's Doohickey*.

You can find more of Natalie Neumann's work at [Natalie.TF](https://natalie.tf).

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Session 01: Re;Birth.exe



So, what exactly do you want me to do, Miss Dusk?

Verde: *First off Jad, please call me Verde. We are both adults, and I see no need for such formalities. Second, as I informed you previously, I want you to describe the events that transpired throughout the experiment.*

Right, right. So you just want a straightforward recap?

Verde: *Not necessarily. I want your own comments on what happened, and I would like for you to be as detailed as possible. Act as if I have no idea what the details of the experiment were. As if I am an outside observer.*

Well, it went on for four days, so I'm not sure I will remember every little detail.

Verde: *No need to worry about that. I made certain that you will be able to recall every minute detail, down to every step and syllable, you and your friends made or uttered at any point during those four days.*

I... wow... um, that's actually quite amazing. Is that just one of your many powers, or...

Verde: *I like to view myself as a woman of many talents, and this is just one of them. Now, assuming you are ready, I would like to begin the next phase of our little experiment.*

Erm, alright... It all started on Saturday, November 22, 2014, in the village of Oransen, Illinois. A tranquil little town I've lived in almost all my life and was gracefully making its way out of autumn and into winter. With the weather on this particular day being just cold enough for me to justify confining myself in my bedroom.

Verde: *And, pretending I have no idea what you look like, how would you describe yourself physically?*

I'm not very good when it comes to describing myself, so forgive me if I'm a bit blunt. I am Caucasian, White, whatever term you prefer, 177 centimeters tall, weigh 57 kilograms, turned 18 as of last month. I also have green eyes that people like to compliment for whatever reason, along with a head of medium-length curly brown hair. At the time I was wearing a nice green jacket that I had for years and only wore indoors, because why would you lounge around in something you wear outside? A light blue shirt, some nice khakis, and some thick socks because, again, it was cold.

As for how I was spending this Saturday afternoon, it was not with anything all that important. I was planning on meeting a friend in about an hour and was in the middle of a PC game that I yanked out of my backlog. But I was soon interrupted by somebody opening up my door and shouting "Sup dude!" far louder than she needed to. I immediately recognized this as my friend, best friend when you get down to it, Maxxie Flare.

She regularly described herself as being 'Blasian,' as her ethnicity was very convoluted and complex, involving ancestors who were African, Indian, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, and then some. She is 167 centimeters tall, a bit heavier than me at 64 kilograms, and much like myself she recently turned 18.

Maxxie's black hair went slightly past her shoulders and was even more of a mess than mine. I found it to be an endearing part about her though, much like her smile, and the adorable black freckles that were sprinkled across her face. At the time she was wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with a blue vest over it, some tan leather pants that clung to her figure, and had her school backpack slung across her shoulders. Nothing out of the ordinary for her, with the exception of a small cardboard box in her right hand.

"Hey Maxxie, you're earl—" I said as she casually tossed the box over to me.

"So, whatcha get?" Maxxie asked.

"I'm not entirely sure..." I murmured.

The box wasn't even taped shut and the only sign it was for me was how the name 'Jad Novus' was written on it in bold white letters. I assumed that somebody simply left this package on my doorstep. But before I could think about what was in the box, or who exactly sent it to me, I was unfolding the cardboard box at my desk as Maxxie peered over my shoulders.

Both Maxxie and I let out a confused "huh" as we gazed at the contents of the box, which were obscured behind a white paper disc sleeve. I quickly picked it up and turned the sleeve around to see a disc with the words 'VD Warning' written on it in cursive. Beneath that, there was some electronic doodad. A chunky device with a violet matte finish, a screen that looked to be ripped off for a graphing calculator, and a total of three turquoise buttons labeled 1, 2, and Go. Buttons 1 and 2 were across from each other horizontally, while Go was placed near the bottom of the device.

"So, what's this supposed to do?" Maxxie asked as she pulled the device out of the box.

"I have no idea, but maybe this... CD-ROM will provide the answers." I answered, looking at the disc in confusion.

After placing the disc into my PC's disc drive, I quickly discovered that the only thing on it was a FLAC file that I promptly played after unplugging my headphones. It was a forty seconds long explanation of what this device was, spoken by a feminine robotic voice. It said—

Verde: *"Hello, my name is Verde. You... Jad Novus... have been chosen to receive a truly remarkable doohickey. A doohickey that may revolutionize mankind. A doohickey possessing limitless power. A doohickey that can craft experiences never felt before. I trust you will take care of this doohickey and will use it to become closer to your friends. As such, I hereby grant you Codename... VD."*

Exactly, just more artificial sounding, and it pronounced *Jad* as *Jade*, instead of having it rhyme with bad, dad, fad, mad, sad, and so forth... Was that intentional by the way?

Verde: *I would prefer to save questions until after you reach a more appropriate stopping spot, if you don't mind, Jad.*

Oh, okay... Anyway, both Maxxie and I were a bit perplexed by what that recording was supposed to mean.

"So, this is some super special awesome thingamajig?" Maxxie asked as she gave the VD another once over.

"I guess, but why would this 'Verde' person be so vague about its details, or even basic function?" I wondered as I ejected the CD-ROM and placed it back into the sleeve.

“Well, when in doubt, push buttons!”

From that cue, Maxxie began pressing the trinity of buttons on the VD. Nothing happened until she began twirling it around like a baton when I suddenly felt a jolt go up through my spine. I initially did not connect the dots, but then Maxxie excitedly thrust the remote into my hands, where I saw my name, “Jad Novus” brighten up the top half of the monochrome 96 by 64 pixel screen. I naturally raised an eyebrow at this and asked Maxxie what she did.

“I really have no idea, I was just fiddling with it and something happened... I prolly just ended up pointing it at you and pressed a button...”

I viewed that as a perfectly valid reason for a name to appear, although where the remote got my name from was a bit of a mystery, as I viewed the ability to instantly know the identity of somebody based on pointing a device at them to be, well, impossible. Maybe if it had a camera or some kind of sensor, but I did not see anything resembling that on the 12 by 7.5 by 2 centimeter remote.

Regardless, I was curious to see what the remote would do if I pressed button number 2 at Maxxie, which looked to send a jolt through her body as well. My eyes were then drawn back to the remote, where they landed on a second name displayed beneath my own, ‘Maxxisaurus Omega Flare’. And yes, that is indeed Maxxie’s full name... it’s a long story.

With two out of three buttons pressed, I did the next logical thing and promptly pressed my thumb on the turquoise button reading ‘Go’. The VD’s screen then shifted away from our names and read ‘Executing Command: Switch’. After raising an eyebrow at this, and before I could inform Maxxie of this change, my vision began to blur, my hearing faded into nothingness, and my entire body grew numb. It all happened near-instantly, preventing me from panicking at the loss of any and all sensation, and, thinking back on it, was kind of terrifying.

Verde: *I did not wish to inspire fear within you, I simply desired to evoke a sense of detachment as, well, you were being physically detached from everything you knew.*

...Which you interpreted as making the process resemble... death?

Verde: *It was a toss between that, or have your reality gradually shift around you, but I felt that would produce a more... sickening feeling.*

And by the by, assuming this is a good time, was that recording supposed to—

Verde: *The recording was created using a pre-existing program, which I did not alter in any way. I was not mocking your name, Jad. In fact, I am particularly fond of it.*

Thanks, I still remember being mocked during elementary school for it, only to have Maxxie try to defend me... using violence... and then we were both sent to the principal's office for the first time... Moving on!

Session 02: Osananajimi;Myself



Just as quickly as the VD stripped me of my senses, I found myself regaining them. My vision grew from a muddled mesh of colors to something clear. Sound transformed from garbled noises into something intelligible. And a general sense of uneasiness coursed through my being. I stared down at the floor as my senses returned and as I did so, I noticed that several things were... off.

Strands of hair entered my vision, but rather than being the curly brown hair I knew all too well, they were instead wavy and black. As I breathed, I felt an unusual sensation on the front of my chest. And though faint, I felt something was wrong with the cadence of my breathing, as it sounded both higher pitched and strangely familiar.

However, the most obvious oddity was the fact that I was now standing in the middle of my bedroom, instead of sitting at my desk in my chair. I lurched my head up and around the room to investigate. I felt a sheet of hair flutter across my shoulders as I did so, further confusing me. But it all began to make sense when I saw *myself*, sitting in my chair, looking down at the remote that I was holding seconds ago.

I was naturally confused by this, and thought to myself, "if that's *me* sitting in the chair, then who am I?" I figured out the answer to that question when I looked down at my hand. Its dark tone

surprised me at first, and as I looked past the hand down towards the white sleeves, I realized I had, somehow, become Maxxie Flare.

A flurry of questions and concerns began cascading throughout my brain as I tried to comprehend this fact, and a sense of unrest began to fill my person. I flailed my arms and hands erratically, coming to terms with the fact that I was in control of them. If I had been left to my own devices, I would have likely fallen into a panic attack, but my attention was quickly directed elsewhere.

More specifically to the sight of my body. The body I had known for all my life. For I saw their hand was down their pants, grabbing onto their erect penis. I froze as I watched this scene unfurl before me, struggling to comprehend oh so many things, and I remained that way until the figure before me spoke up.

“Holy shit! What the bonk is going on here?”

“M-Maxxie?” I replied, startled by the voice that rattled throughout my skull. “Are... are you in my body?”

“Yeah— Dude, wait, hold your goldarn horses for just a moment!”

Maxxie quickly pulled a hand out of her pants, almost shoving the VD off of her lap in the process.

Verde: *I want to stop you for a moment and make sure that you are aware of how you are using possessives.*

Huh? What do you mean?

Verde: *I am referring to how you referred to the pants that were originally yours as ‘Maxxie’s pants’ after she switched bodies with you.*

Oh, well, it just makes sense, right? They are no longer *my* pants if I am not wearing them and... English is actually a pretty annoying language in this regard. But if I were to talk about the shirt belonging to Maxxie’s body, when I am inside of her body, I would refer to it as *my* shirt. I could talk about how, ‘I touched the shirt currently worn by Maxxie’s body, which I was occupying at the time.’ But that is so much clunkier and harder to say than, ‘I touched *my* shirt.’

Verde: *Fair enough, but what about your bedroom, is it now Maxxie’s? What of Maxxie’s family, are they yours when you are in her body?*

Well... technically you can argue in favor of either method. While I am in Maxxie’s original body, I cannot help but view the body, clothing, and such as belonging to me, and being mine, if only

for the moment. However, the bedroom we were in after we swapped, that I still view as my bedroom. I view Maxxie's family as still being Maxxie's, even though, to them, unaware of this swap, I was Maxxie.

When I speak, regardless of the body I am in, it is *my* voice. It's not my original voice, it's my new voice. At the same time, if I was doing homework that was assigned to Maxxie, while in her body, I was doing her homework because it was assigned to Maxxie. Despite being in her body— original body I should say, I am not Maxxie, I am Jad Novus, and I will always be Jad Novus, no matter whose body I am in.

Verde: *That's not necessarily true, as your mind could... Nevermind. That was a tad bit convoluted, but I like your train of thought. Now then, please, carry on.*

After taking her hand out of her pants, Maxxie once again took hold of the VD, looking at it with a degree of childlike wonder. But rather than play with it any further, Maxxie instead placed the device on my desk, jolted out of my chair, and hopped towards me. It was an odd sight, looking up at my original body, staring at it from angles that I had so rarely seen myself, and it being so close to my face. Yet for as much as I would have *loved* to examine my original body from the third person like this, we were both a bit distracted by our current bodies, which we began to examine in closer detail... No, not like that, Verde. We didn't do anything naughty...

Verde: *Really? You didn't try anything at all when you were in each other's bodies?*

I... let me just continue the story.

As I leaned my head down to examine my body in more detail, I was immediately greeted by strands of black hair that flooded my face. It was soft and well maintained, despite being so haphazardly styled, but its length was something that irritated me, if only because I had historically kept my hair fairly short. After briefly brushing a hand through these strands, my fingers drifted to my face. As my fingers touched this skin, my mind flashed back to the sleepovers Maxxie and I had in our youth. Bundled together in the same bed, our faces touching as we drifted off to sleep.

It was a warm and smooth sensation that quickly led me to play with my hands. Maxxie had been dedicating herself to being an artist for years, and as such, she always took care of her hands. They had a sense of strength, dexterity, softness, and delicacy to them. After seeing the amazing things she could do with a pen, it felt empowering to be in possession of such hands, even if I lacked the knowledge of how to use them to their full potential.

I then continued moving about these hands over the body I resided in, reaching through the shirt to feel my arms, stomach, shoulder, and back, then rolling up my pants to feel my legs. Every part of my current body had a sense of softness and warmth to it, and just feeling it made my heart race. Mind you, I was not touching anything I shouldn't. I mean, over the years I had,

unintentionally, seen Maxxie naked a few times, but I really did not want to delve into the areas I failed to mention—

Verde: *Jad, you can just say the breasts and crotch. Just explain why you did not want to touch yourself.*

The reason why I kept my hands away from my... slightly below average, I guess, sized chest and her crotch region was due to a couple of factors. One, I had just switched into her body and did not want to do anything like that when she was inches away from me. Two... Did I mention how we've been friends since second grade?

Verde: *You implied something to that effect, yes.*

Yes, that's the reason why I did not want to... um, 'delve down the dark depths of devilish desires,' as I'm sure Maxxie would put it. I've known her for most of my life, and, well, I never really wanted to do anything sexual with her... Or just about anybody for that matter, which I guess would be my third point.

Unfortunately, it was a bit hard to ignore the... *assets* of Maxxie's original body. The breasts were very prominent in my mind thanks to the article of clothing that caressed them and tied behind my back. And as for the other bit, I felt an *odd comfort* in the lack of a... the lack of a penis and testicles.

I'm guessing that part of this comfort came from the leather pants. They tightly clung against my legs, made everything feel warm, compact, and pleasant. Meanwhile, the notably looser shirt had a very comforting texture that I became well associated with as I began rubbing it against my skin and smiling. There was a sense of 'rightness' I couldn't help but associate with the situation, helped by a sense of energy that flowed through my body, allowing me to vividly understand why exactly Maxxie was so bubbly.

I momentarily wanted to make use of this energy, and get a bit more comfortable in this body, by running around, maybe even exercising to take care of the bits of 'thickness fat' Maxxie had been developing. But after toying with that fantasy for a second, I returned to the reality before me and began asking myself some very important questions.

"How do we switch back? Can we even switch back? Is this a permanent body swap? Can I possibly hope to live as Maxxie? Where did she put that remote?"

Just as I was about to fall into another panicked fit, I directed my eyes towards Maxxie and saw that she was taking her shirt off. She paused after glancing at me, recognized the *lewdness* of her actions, and attempted to recover from this awkward situation by adopting a dumb expression that looked unsightly on my face.

“What? I just wanted to get a whole new perspective on ya, Jad!” Maxxie said.

“Oh, um, I guess that’s fine,” I stammered, still not used to the voice in my throat and head.

“But... We really should make sure we can switch ba—”

It was always a bad sign whenever I heard Maxxie speak in a softer tone, and that’s precisely what flowed through my head as I tried speaking to her. But that’s not why I suddenly stopped talking. Instead, it was due to how my bedroom door flung open in the middle of our conversation, revealing my mother. Meaning the mother who raised me, Jad Novus, for the past eighteen years, even though I was in Maxxie’s body at the time.

My mother, Caroline Steticks, is a lovely woman who I think the world of. She is 169 centimeters tall, meaning she was just a single centimeter taller than myself at the moment, has kept herself under 60 kilograms since I was born, and is 34-years-old. Although she often gets mistaken for being in her late twenties, which makes the age gap between us look even smaller and more concerning to any onlookers.

She had blonde hair tied in a bun, a fair and soft complexion, and hazy blue eyes which I always thought highly of. Although, most people would probably focus on her figure which, *I guess*, is quite attractive, featuring large breasts and a trim waistline. She wasn’t wearing much that would show off her... *stuff*, though, as she settled on a medium-toned green sweater and some jeans for today.

She walked into my room carrying a plate of various fruits and veggies, including carrots, celery, peppers, cucumber slices, and two sliced up oranges and apples. But by suddenly entering at this inopportune moment, she scared the crap out of both of us. I, personally, had in no way accounted or mentally prepared for this, and completely froze.

Maxxie, thankfully, thought quickly and was infinitely better at improvising than I was. Like a pro, she tossed her shirt back on before the door was fully opened, and effortlessly slid into a ‘good enough’ impersonation of me. Which was impressive, but it had an asterisk attached, as we had known each other for the majority of our lives.

“Oh, thanks mom,” Maxxie said, nonchalantly taking the plate from her hands.

“You’re welcome, Jad. And is there anything I can get for you, Maxxie?” My mother said, diverting her attention towards me.

“Nah, no thanks M— erm, C. I’m good!” I said while rubbing the back of my head.

First encounter, and I nearly botched the first rule of impersonation. I recovered though, pulling out the nickname C, which was derived from how my mother’s name ‘Caroline’ was hard for

Maxxie to say when she was little. It was a simple nickname, but I always thought it was kinda cute.

After exchanging these few words, my mother was content, and promptly left us to resume, “whatever you two are in the middle of.”

Verde: *Oh, if only she knew...*

Heh. We both shared a collective sigh of relief once she left, but Maxxie’s quickly turned into a giggle.

“That was *so cool*,” Maxxie whispered into my ear.

“I g-guess, but back to what I was s-saying, w-we really should make sure that we can r-reverse this whole body swap thing.” I stammered out, a bit afraid that my mother would sneak back in, even though there was no reason for her to.

“Oh, so is my body shit-tier or something?” Maxxie said with scorn as she folded her arms.

“Wha— No! I am just saying that, while you are my favorite person in the world, I might not want to spend the rest of my life as you. I just want to make sure that we *can* switch back with this... VD.”

“VD? Do you mean the remote?” Maxxie asked as she put her jacket back on.

“That’s what Verde called it, so I figured it would be a better name than just calling it ‘the remote,’ ‘the device,’ or... another generic name.”

“If it works, we can switch back right away, right?”

“Y-Yes, I guess.”

“Then lemme whip out the VD and let’s get back to the norms!” Maxxie said as she pulled her arms behind her head and stretched.

After securing the VD from my desk, I promptly pressed button one at Maxxie, which made her squirm a bit and caused her name, Maxxisaurus Flare, to appear on the VD’s screen. Button two did much the same for myself, and after assuming that everything was in order, I placed the VD on my bed and pressed Go. It was probably a needless precaution, but I did not want to risk dropping something as valuable as this.

Switching back was, well, a lot like switching in the first place. Senses faded away into nothing, and before I knew it, I was standing on the other side of the room, staring at the body I inhabited moments ago.

Verde: *A moment is technically 90 seconds, so it was technically far less than a single moment, let alone several moments.*

...Duly noted, Verde. Regardless, I was back in my original body, which I began moving about, caressing myself a bit, and slightly regretting the lack of a mirror in my room. It was certainly comforting to be myself again, but I was more relieved that the VD actually worked than anything else. After I glanced down at my person, my attention went towards Maxxie, who was in the middle of fondling her... assets.

"Bip, zip, check-ups, all is good in boobie land. And in the back... yep. An anaconda don't want none less you got buns hun, and I've got 'em once again!"

As I watched Maxxie as she fondled her breasts and butt, I couldn't help but let out a very audible laugh.

"What? I just wanted to get re-acclimated with my *most precious* assets. For all I know, that doohickey of yours could've drained me of my sexiness... or something." Maxxie grumbled.

"How would you make a remote powered by sex appeal? It's really not a quantifiable energy source. Besides, didn't Verde say that this thing had unlimited power?"

"Something like that... anyway, now that we know this is not a one-way trip, I think it's high time that you go back to being a DBG!" Maxxie said as she nonchalantly waltzed over to my bed, plucking the VD from it.

"A... DBG?" I asked. "Is that some sort of acronym or are you just being a goof?"

Before I received the luxury of having my question answered, Maxxie registered the two of us with the VD, and promptly pressed Go, switching out bodies once more. Shaking my head around after I was hit by the same numbing sensation for the third time in the past fifteen minutes, Maxxie ran up to invade my personal space... Which I guess she would have a right to do, seeing as how I was in her original body after all.

"Ya know, a DBG, delicious brown girl," Maxxie explained as she leaned into my face and gave me a lick on the cheek.

"Huh, I expected it to be a bit more... yummy. Instead, it's just sorta salty... not really *delicious* though." Maxxie mused as she took a step away from me.

“Maxxie, skin color does not denote taste, and... what are we doing?” I asked her while tilting my head.

“What do you mean? We’re just hanging out, but with each other’s faces for a little bit— *Oh*, now I get your space train of thought. Just hear me out on this for a minute, okay? What if we spent the night in each other’s bodies? We’ve had dozens of sleepovers, been to each other’s houses more times than we could count, so why not max out our social links beyond the beyond, and go from *best friends* to *ultra best friends*? It will be cool, intimate, and if we keep it a secret, I’m sure it will be absolutely wicked. Shit, just getting busted by C was enough to give me the *wild and wet willies*... the kind with the sweat, not the penis kind.”

After Maxxie referenced her penis, she began poking her pants, revealing that she had an erection.

I took a deep breath and looked over my current body with Maxxie’s request in mind. It’s true that I am *incredibly* close with Maxxie, but I couldn’t help but be a pessimist when imagining what could possibly go wrong.

“I’m not sure, we—”

“You only got one shot! Do not miss your chance to flow! This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo!”

As Maxxie said that, I couldn’t help but laugh. It... was an in-joke between us, based on a mashup between an *Idolmaster* and Eminem song. It was a good point regardless, as this was an amazing opportunity that, as far as I could tell, nobody has ever received.

“Okay, okay. It will probably be interesting, and—”

“Dude, it will be the *best* night!” Maxxie shouted, her level of excitement sounding... bizarre given her current voice. “Don’t get all down in the worries about what could go wrong, deal with that when shit *is* bad, for now, look towards the future! Hit that pie in the sky, and eat it like a cool fat bear itching his nuts! Go for that big fish and don’t eat that shitty tasting baby salmon! Ippo never said fuck it and died in the ring, he went after that bastard and hit him in the face with a gazelle punch, ‘cos he’s the best boy!”

I could not stop myself from laughing at the end of her overactive spiel. I had fallen to my bed as it began, and was tossing and turning by the end of it. While at the peak of my laughter, Maxxie decided to join me in my bed, hugging me as the two of us rolled back and forth... before she bumped into a wall.

“Eheheh, so we cool?” Maxxie asked me as our faces touched one another.

“Of course we are. We’re always cool,” I answered as I tightened my hug.

“Aw, you’re positively adorkable in my body, you know that Jad? Keep it up, and we might have to *stay like this forever and evers*,” Maxxie said as she began fiddling with my hair.

I giggled a bit, put my hand into her hair, my original hair, and... we just kinda did that for a minute. At least until she ruined the mood by showing a hand up my shirt and cupping a pair of squeezes. I curtly looked at her as, well, she just fondled her original body. But instead of showing any sign of regret, Maxxie just made a stupid grin that caused both of us to let out a laugh.

Verde: *I do believe that we reached a good place to stop, at least for the moment.*

So, for the next ninety seconds?

Verde: *...Would you believe me if I claimed my wording there was intentional?*

Well... I may, but now that we’re at a stopping point, I want some answers.

Verde: *Fair enough, I do owe you that much.*

So, you are this kind of... God who can shape reality, and did so just to see how I would react to, well, a body swapping adventure with my best friends?

Verde: *Yes, that is correct, sans the god comment, I greatly dislike the idea of being compared to a divine entity. That said, I am the one who set these events in motion. My reason for doing so is because I was curious to see how you, Jad Novus, would handle this unique situation, and what your thoughts on these events are after the fact. So I brought you into my dimension, realm, domain, what have you, to speak with you about the events that transpired from November 22, 2014 to November 25, 2014.*

Wait, so this all actually happened?

Verde: *It all happened, but I am also a being who can rewrite history and change reality around. In short, it happened, but I made it a separate branch of reality.*

I... Okay, so you are a being with great powers who... are you an alien?

Verde: *No. I am a human being with what amounts to very bizarre and profoundly powerful superpowers.*

Meaning you can rewrite reality and constantly change your form?

Verde: *Yes, I demonstrated my powers to you earlier, Jad. Given my powers, I am not tied to any specific base form, but I identify as a woman and like to retain my human origins, so I typically adopt the body of a human woman. Though, I do regularly change things up for my own amusement. This is why I was a muscular Brazilian woman with flowing black hair, in a tight green dress when I first met you. Yet now I am a tall, lean Scandinavian woman, wearing a periwinkle sweater, and some black leggings.*

Alright. Sorry, it's just that, not to be rude or anything, but you really did not explain that very well when you brought me into this pocket dimension of yours.

Verde: *I misjudged your ability to comprehend bizarre situations— or rather, I had assumed that people, in general, were more accustomed to the bizarre, which was an error on my part.*

That seems... odd, but just let me clarify a few things before getting right back to it.

Verde: *Go ahead.*

You are a woman with superhuman abilities who used her powers to conduct an experiment of sorts wherein she would give a young man and his friends a body swapping remote. All because you were curious to see how they would react when given this amazing device. Enticed by the actions of the one you gave this device to, you brought them into your personal pocket dimension and enhanced their memories. All so they could recount the events that you placed them through and observed yourself.

Verde: *...Yes, my experiment was one based on human behavior and their response to the unknown. Well, not necessarily human behavior, as this was more of a case study than anything, as I found that you and your friends were an interesting group who piqued my curiosity.*

So, amongst *all the people in the world*, across *all of human history*, what about my friends and I are so dang interesting?

Verde: *You are not the 'most' interesting sort, but I nevertheless find you all to be an entertaining group of eccentric teenagers and a prime set of candidates for this little case study of mine.*

...I guess that's about all the answer I need... but this situation is still all kinds of weird.

Verde: *Indeed it is, Jad. But I would advise that you just roll with it. You'll probably end up much happier that way.*

Alright, I guess... Now, where was I?

Session 03: Maximum Flare



So, after I caught Maxxie fondling her original body, my body at the moment, red-handed, she immediately tried to change the subject.

“So, um, I didn’t really plan much for today...”

As Maxxie muttered, she placed her hands on her lap, probably to conceal a boner.

“Really? Did you *forget* what came out yesterday?” I asked while glaring at her..

“Maybe... I know I got a box in the mail, but I really wanted to finish this drawing. Coloring was a bit annoying, the editing program for the video I made for it crashed, and there was something I wanted to keep tabs on. So no, I *totes* forgot. Let’s make amends right now and boot that shit up!”

“...*Super Smash Bros. for Wii U* just came out, Maxxie,” I said in a monotone.

“*Oh SNAP!* Pop that sucker in and let’s do the wholesome kind of smashing!”

With that, I began preparing my Wii U game console, which looked a bit ridiculous with the GameCube controller attachment awkwardly sticking out of it. It was hooked up to a... What, Verde?

Verde: *I just think you could explain this better if you step back and describe your room.*

Really, at this point in the story? ...Fine, you do have a point.

My room was pretty big for a bedroom, about 250 square feet. In it, I had a standard twin-sized bed, a gaming PC that I managed to squeeze into a slick, monolithic white mid-tower case, a large desk dressed with an assortment of school supplies. There was also a 24-inch television right across from the bed, with an assortment of game consoles and so forth plugged into it. I also had a couple of shelves filled with games, DVDs, Blu-Rays, books, comics, and a few figures. I probably invested way too much money into the contents of those shelves, but I tried to keep it fairly nice looking.

Verde: *Any posters?*

No, not anymore, I was convinced by *The Comedy Button*, a podcast I really enjoy, to put them all down, and hang up a couple of frames that I switch out every couple of months. I realized that making a collage of things you liked was not the best way to design a room. I used to have a lot more stuff, mostly toys and trading cards from my childhood. But I realized I didn't really want any of them, so I hid them around the local elementary school and a park a couple of blocks away from my house. Maybe some kids found them, I don't know. All I know is that they are gone and my room has more open space.

Anyhow, playing *Smash Bros.* while stuffing our faces with healthy snacks was probably not the best idea when you recently swapped bodies with somebody. Because there was a lot to take in as we both stuffed our faces and tried to actually play the game. There were subtle differences with how our hands moved, the proportions of our fingers, and even the intensity we made inputs with. We spent the first hour trying to relearn our skills, almost getting creamed by the two new computer-controlled challengers who showed up. But we eventually got mostly used to it. Not to the point where I felt I was as good as I was when playing *Melee* or *Brawl* back in the day, but we were getting back into the groove despite our swapped bodies.

However, playing the game I noticed another change, namely in my behavior. Maxxie was the same as ever, hollering and hooting as she more or less fumbled through the game, not fully understanding the intricacies of the mechanics, and getting most of her KOs from built-up damage or through items. I found myself doing something similar, getting into the game as I felt a level of excitement that I was honestly a bit taken aback by.

I felt so happy and energized as we went on for... four hours or so, constantly laughing, cracking dumb jokes, and just enjoying each other's company. Taking myself out of the situation,

it was almost like there were two Maxxies playing the game, and I honestly felt *right* in acting that way.

Verde: *So, you began questioning your nature after, oh, how many years of knowing this girl?*

Well, no, it's more like— in the moment, in her original body, feeling the warmth and energy, hearing a voice that I always identified as hers— I was just doing what came naturally. It was fun, I don't regret anything about it, but it does strike me as a little odd in retrospect. I'd be inclined to chop that up to the sheer excitement that had built up over this game, and how I had not even begun playing it, as I really wanted to go through it with Maxxie.

I did begin acting more like.... myself, I guess, when my mother came up to inform us that dinner was ready at a little before 18:00. It was a simple announcement, but it startled us to the point where we nearly fell off my bed, which we typically sat on while playing games.

After we finished our current match and exited the game, turned off my Wii U, and so forth, Maxxie felt the need to make a comment about my body.

"Man, this thing just loves going upright, doesn't it? Hasn't been flaccid for a full thirty minutes over the past few hours." Maxxie commented while adjusting her pants to better show me her erection.

"Well, erm, maybe it's a reaction to putting a pansexual mind into an asexual person's body?" I mused as I rolled up my GameCube controller cables.

"So, if you were in the pansexual club like myself, would you get a boner whenever you think about the dirty and naughty things like I am?"

"Well, no, then my body and mind would be more in sync with that sort of thing, and right now there is a discrepancy between yours. My body, I guess I should say my *original* body, is not accustomed to the level of sexual desires that you regularly experience. Because the body is not accustomed to dealing with all of these impulses, its sexual organs are becoming erect. At least that's my half-baked theory on the matter."

"Ah, so *the body becomes erotic* because of the *mind*! In that case, I should be able to fap to the same stuff that always got my 'Flare on.' ...Would you mind if I do that tonight?"

"Oh, right, staying as each other for the night... Sure, you can masturbate in my body. I mean, you are in my body and will see me naked when you shower anyway. Just try to be discreet about it. I really don't want my mother to walk in and see her son orgasming... or smell the scent of cum wafting through the air."

“And will you make your sixth or-ga-zam be a lady or-ga-zam?” Maxxie asked me as she placed her head on my shoulder.

“I... what?” I muttered, taken aback.

“C’mon, there is nothing to be afraid of, you walked in on me twice and it’s not a big deal if Babs walks in and sees Maxxie Flare’s fingers in her neko-neko fun zone. You’re not gonna get in triple trouble, and I’m sure the sensation will rock your socks off..

“We’ve had this conversation before, Maxxie. Hell, we have probably had over 24 hours worth of conversations about this. I think there is absolutely nothing wrong or shameful about masturbation, let alone sexual activity. I’m a bit weirded out as... you’re basically— not a sister, more like a really close cousin. And while I already saw you naked... at least *seven times* by now... do you really want me to fap as you?”

“Jad, I’m not gonna force you to do anything, and if you don’t wanna, I’m cool with that. But you’re my favorite person in the world, and I think it’d be *super-fuck-amazing* if we can use this VD to achieve a superior level of intimacy with one another... Wait, I think I meant a different word. Yeah, intimacy normally means intercourse, and sex with you would be... Point is, I think it would be *nice* if we knew how each other’s bodies felt when orgasming.”

“...I’ll see how the night goes, but first, I think we should head downstairs,” I said as I felt a rumble in my stomach.

“Oh, right, I forgot to eat lunch. Eh, that bastard of a meal never really fits into my schedule unless I can eat it one-handed. Somebody really needs to make some proper meal bars that you can eat all day and not become a fatty Patty,” Maxxie muttered as she left my bedroom.

I followed behind her, trying to destroy the mental imagery of Maxxie and I having sex.

Verde: *You should properly explain why you find that idea to be disgusting.*

One, I have known Maxxie since we were seven, so she is like a really close cousin... which I just said a minute ago. And rule one about cousins of the opposite sex is to not have sex with them, even if you think they are sexy. Two, I am asexual... as I *also* said shortly ago. In my case, that means that there is nothing that really arouses me, and I have no desire to have sex with any person. I only ever ejaculated five times, one was accidental, the other was curiosity, and the other three times were part of requests Maxxie gave me. It offered some relief, but the only time I ever would plan on doing such an act again would be to save some of my sperm for... the things you save sperm for.

Moving along, before dinner, we both made our way to one of my home’s three bathrooms, I went to the upstairs one, and Maxxie went into the downstairs one. But, um, I forgot about the

whole genital situation until I pulled down my leather pants and was pleased by how smoothly it went down my brown legs.

Verde: *Did you try to pee standing up?*

What? No! What kind of *dummy* would do that? I don't even pee standing up normally. I just sat down and waited for a stream of liquid to stream out as I looked at the ceiling. I was weirded out by the sensation of peeing from a different orifice than I'm used to, by how wide the... pee spray was, so I tried to get it over with as quickly as possible. Well, as quickly as possible while doing things right, so I made sure to grab a square of toilet paper to... clean up. If only because I didn't want to get pee all over my panty and how— What's that look for?

Verde: *Your panty?*

Okay, have you ever heard somebody use the term 'pant' in reference to a single pair of pants? It's pretty much the same thought process.

Verde: *Then why did you call your leather pant 'pants'?*

...It's a double standard that Maxxie and I agreed on back in Middle school when she had chosen the topic of panty shots for a paper. It's a long story that ended up with her getting in trouble for bringing in 'used panties' for everybody in class... She got called into the principal's office *a lot* over the years.

Once I pulled the pants back up and washed my hands, I looked in the mirror. It was strange seeing another person's reflection mirroring my every move, even after spending hours in her body. And seeing Maxxie's expressive face shift as I saw fit was... novel. I could make the girl in the mirror smile, laugh, look at me with disgust, and flex a full range of emotions. I spent a minute taking delight in the novelty of it all, all before I heard a knock on the door.

"Hey, no fapping before din-din, ya hear?"

I quickly jolted out of the room, inspiring Maxxie to make a playful comment about 'faster-bating,' which I sighed at before we headed down to eat dinner. I initially made a beeline straight for the dining room chair I'd been using for about as long as I could recall. Fortunately, Maxxie quickly scooted on in as I nearly ruined the illusion of impersonation with a single action.

As we took our seats, my mother walked into the room, carrying two large bowls in hand. I offered her a warm grin, but Maxxie immediately pinched me, clearly dissatisfied with my performance. A moment later, I fumbled out a response.

"So, what're we having tonight, C?" I asked as nonchalantly as I could manage

“Oh, it’s a little bit of everything I made today. Some chicken meatloaf, beans, potatoes, quinoa, ground-up broccoli and cauliflower, mixed with some salsa,” she said as she placed the bowls before us.

Yes, it’s not really the sort of *luxury* meal you would expect based on my house, which was big, nice, and at the edge of a wealthy neighborhood. Everything was just thrown together, but it was what I liked, and fairly easy to make. ...According to her.

I quickly grabbed my spoon and began to dig in... but as I saw my darker toned hand, I remembered that I had to keep up my appearance. So, I shouted “Itadakimasu” and began digging in. For the record, Maxxie is only a *little* Japanese, a sixteenth or so, but being a self-declared weeaboo, she took advantage of it whenever she felt like it.

As I took my first bite of the dish, I realized something that I ignored when chomping down veggies in between rounds of *Smash Bros*. The fact that Maxxie’s original body’s taste buds were... *way better* than what I was used to. The barrage of flavors and their intensity was *amazing* to me, and I started savoring every spoonful. At least until Maxxie grabbed my attention with a grumble.

“Hmm, this tastes pretty average,” Maxxie whispered just loud enough for me to hear.

“Really? It tastes *wonderful* to me... Could it have to do with my taste buds?”

“Maybe, but...” Maxxie said as she sniffed the food. “Huh, I can’t really smell it either. I mean, I can, but it’s... Jad, I think your senses are just kinda *rubbish*.”

“Really? I guess I never reacted to smells that much, and I am...”

“Well, I could just be an oddball in an odd world whose taste levels are at the ultra maximum. I really don’t know. Maybe we could try some other foods when we’re done?” Maxxie pondered as she took another bite.

“I think you’ll be pretty full after this, but there’s some... let’s see, paella, nasi goreng, schnitzel, yukgaejang, borscht, and tom kha gai in the fridge if you want something later tonight.” I reiterated.

“For real, you’ve got *all* that stuff? Then why are we eating this *mess*?”

“The stuff in the fridge is a few days old, so I guess she didn’t want to serve... me, the ‘guest,’ leftovers, and what we’re eating was made today.. You can ask for something else if you want to.”

“Nah, I’m fine... But she seriously still makes *all* that stuff?” Maxxie asked before taking another bite.

“You know she likes cooking,”

“I guess, but she doesn’t need to do anything really fancy or elaborate anymore now that Bryce is out of the picture.”

As Maxxie said that, she immediately regretted her words, as she knew that I didn’t like to think about *him*. I tried to continue, but I spoke without a speck of joy in my voice..

“It’s kind of like how you love drawing, okay. It’s a hobby and she loves seeing what she can do when not constrained to... ten dishes she needs to make week in and week out.”

Maxxie played back the last few seconds of the conversation in her head before looking at me with a remorseful expression on her borrowed face.

“Shit, I really did not mean to—”

“No, no, I should get over it,” I said, bitterness still lingering in my voice. “It’s been nearly two years now, and I should get over it.”

You don’t need to say anything, Verde, I’ll explain.

Verde: *Kay.*

Bryce is my father. He is also... an *awful person*. He hurt many, many people over the years, but none more than my mother and I, routinely showering us with resentment, anger, and a bunch of stuff I’d rather not talk about. My mother divorced him on her 33rd birthday, January 11, 2013, and I have talked to him... twice since then. I have no idea where he is, or what he is doing. He is no longer part of my life as far as I am concerned, and view him as an example of how not to behave more than anything.

From that sour note, we were able to quickly change topics, to that of more *Smash Bros.* talk, and eventually some tips and tricks about acting as each other. This conversation, and dinner, lasted about an hour before I looked at a wall clock and saw that it was already 19:20, indicating that I should get going soon.

It was an odd sensation, leaving my own home, at night, alone, saying goodbye to my mother, and the body that had been mine for the past 18 years. Yet, I made a promise, and I intended to stick to it. After getting all bundled up in Maxxie’s winter gear, I walked out of the Steticks household, waving, and telling ‘Jad’ that I’d catch him later.

Maxxie's house was about four blocks away from mine, and during this familiar route, I wound up zoning out as I went along the familiar trail, and enjoying the late autumn night. The sound of leaves rustling in the cool breeze. The colors of autumn that popped off trees and gathered around the streets and sidewalks. And the sight of the familiar homes that looked ever so slightly bigger than they did yesterday. However, my focus was soon directed internally. As I walked, I took comfort in the clothes I was wearing, the warmth they provided, and the way the song I was humming as it resonated throughout my skull

It was there where I felt my general movement and manner of walking begin to change. Where I began focusing more on the motion of my hips, adopting a more feminine manner of walk than I was used to. In retrospect, it was probably muscle memory rearing its head, urging me to 'walk like Maxxie.' Regardless, I simply went with it and enjoyed my short walk to a home that I had spent a couple of dozen nights at over the years.

The Flare household had always possessed a sense of grandeur that was above most other houses in this neighborhood. It was a tall and regal looking home, enough for one to dub it a mansion, but it *technically* wasn't according to some detail that I can only foggily remember.

Anyway, I approached the home and almost rang the doorbell, before I remembered the backpack across my shoulders, and the keys it held. After some mild fumbling, I pulled out a ring of color-coded keys and used the lime green one to enter what was, to the world outside of Maxxie and I, *my* home.

I inhaled deeply as I took in the large brightly lit foyer of the Flare residence, mentally preparing myself for the inevitable interactions I would face. I took off my coat, hat, scarf, gloves, and boots, put on my best grin, and seconds later, Babs greeted me.

Babs Pequot is the maid, housekeeper, caretaker, and even a bit of a nanny for the Flare household... on top of doing some secretarial stuff for Maxxie's parents. She's an incredible woman who I've known for half my life and is... *basically* Maxxie's aunt. She is a person who *I'm* pretty close to by extension... but I couldn't help but feel she would spot something wrong with 'Maxxie' the instant I spoke.

For visual reference, she is a Hispanic woman with curly shoulder-length charcoal hair, is the same age as my mother, 34, and is 1.75 meters tall. Meaning that I was looking up at her yet again on account of my current body. All of her 66 kilograms went to the 'right' places, as Maxxie liked to say. And despite working almost every day for half her life, she looked young enough that I'm sure people would hesitate to guess her age was anything above 30. At the time she was wearing simple house clothes, as she only dressed up when deemed *necessary*..

"You know, just because you're an 'adult' now doesn't mean that I don't have a problem with you strolling in, at night, after being gone for six hours. At least send me a text, girl." Babs said with a smirk.

“Eh, sorry Babs, it’s just that I got a bit tied up in a couple of things, and that idea just, poof, vanished from my noggin!” I said with a chuckle.

“Guess that I should have expected as much. Did you at least have dinner at Jad’s?” Babs sighed as she rustled my hair.

“Yeah, so I should be good to go for the rest of the night.”

“Uh-huh, just be sure that you actually go to bed *before* midnight, alright dear?”

“No worries Babs, I’ll be a good girl who keeps her demons in all kinds of checks.”

I then scurried up the stairs to the second floor, and made my way to the door with the name “Maxxisaurus Omega Flare” crudely etched into the wood, along with another etching that only vaguely resembled a dinosaur... She did that long before I met her, and her parents never got her another door as some kind of punishment... I think. It could be that Maxxie just liked having a partially busted up door.

In any case, I opened it up and was greeted by the reason why I had not been invited to her house this past week because she clearly procrastinated cleaning her room. Her room was big, bigger than my bedroom, but she was not a very organized person. Supposedly, the room has a sense of ‘organized chaos’ to it, but that was probably just a lie. Anybody who could discern a system from this assortment of figures, comics, art books, art supplies, games, dolls, clothes, knick-knacks, keepsakes, and... stuff, was a far wiser person than I.

shook my head and briefly wondered whether she deliberately chose to have me spend the night in her body just so I would clean her room... But I doubted that she would have planned that far ahead.

Verde: *Before we get into how you cleaned her room, I do believe that a break is in order.*

Oh, okay... In that case, could you tell me what’s the rule on interruptions?

Verde: *I simply make interruptions when I believe you would miss a detail, if I feel you should draw attention to certain things, or if I feel you could explain certain things that might not be the most obvious.*

Fair enough, but you are aware that this will take a couple of hours to get—

Verde: *‘You’ are aware that we exist in a place without time, right? We could stay here for a million years and you would not age a second, nor would Earth move on without you.*

Really? Now *that* is interesting... Say, is there an entire universe beyond this room, or...

Verde: *I only created this room and the surrounding details, the rest of the dimension is a void of infinite nothingness.*

Oh, I guess that makes sense... But why did you decide to make it look like a therapist's office?

Verde: *I felt that this would prove to be a calming environment. I can change it if you feel you would be more comfortable in, say, your own home.*

Erm, no, no, this is perfectly fine... Actually, could you change the wall color? I'm not much of a fan of maroon. Maybe make it a nice... lavender or something.

Verde: *Sure thing, Jad.*

Session 04: The World of Girl Love



I just realized that I should explain why Maxxie's room is a mess when she has a 'maid.' Quite simply, cleaning her own room is Maxxie's sole household responsibility. Why exactly does she put this off so often? Well, when you are unsure as to tackle a problem and are constantly tumbling your way into new fascinations, it is easy to lose focus of something that is, in your mind, not fun in the slightest. That, and she has the mentality where she does not need to fix something unless it is properly broken. I, however, simply could not spend an entire night amidst such clutter.

In order to negate an hour of silence beyond the ambient sound of ruffling, I took this opportunity to plop on and begin listening to Maxxie's MP3 player. Yes, a proper MP3 player, instead of putting everything on her phone. She needed a dedicated device because she had over two weeks worth of music, spanning all genres, styles, and levels of notoriety. I briefly wondered how she found the time to even listen to all this stuff, but that question was quickly answered by the drawing tablet that leaned next to her PC. 'Drawers' like her practically lived off of music.

Anyhow, I ended up resuming a playlist she was listening to, named 'The Worst X Mecha Yuri'. I asked Maxxie about this at a later time and she said the playlist is made up of albums from a pair of music labels that produce this weird electronic, ambient, experimental music made by and for complete weeaboos. As such, the tracks had a lot of sampling and sound clips from animes I could not *possibly* source or name.

I actually found this to be a rather relaxing set of tunes that went well in immersing me into Maxxie's life. All as I dug through her disheveled collection of things I honestly wondered if Maxxie even remembered buying. Here are just some of the things I found lying in her room: A boxed Solid Snake Nendoroid, a sealed copy of *Freedom Wars*, an Akira Toriyama art book, an Amazon box filled with *Pokémon Adventures* manga box sets, a used NES Gameboy Advance SP. If she got all of this a few days ago, it makes slightly more sense why she would forget about her 'second most anticipated game of all time.' ...*Slightly*.

How did she afford all of this? Well, she lived in an 'almost-mansion' with a live-in caretaker. She was rich, and got ample amounts of birthday money and a generous monthly allowance she got for maintaining a 3.0 out of 4.0 GPA.

Anyway, I cleaned Maxxie's room until roughly 21:00, when I promptly laid down on Maxxie's bed, taking a long sigh as I looked over my accomplishment. Everything was categorized, all of the books were placed in alphabetical order, her figures were 'tastefully disheveled' throughout her room, her hardwood floor was clean and free of clutter, and I even cleaned her tablet and monitor screens. Her massive walk-in closet was still filled with more disheveled clothes than I could even *hope* to organize in a single night, but I'd say did *more* than my share of cleaning for Maxxie. After so much rummaging, I wanted to do little more than sit down and relax, but as I felt drops of sweat across my forehead, I remembered that I would need to take a shower soon...

As I said before, I saw her naked a handful of times in the past, but that did little to instill confidence in me at the very *idea* of taking a shower in Maxxie's body. It would not be a situation where *she* was in control, it would be one where *I* called the shots and managed everything. I would need to massage my hands over Maxxie's original body, scrub it, and take in every detail about her naked body from a first-person perspective.

I groaned, realizing that it was an inevitability I would need to approach sooner or later. Thankfully, something came knocking at Maxxie's door, meaning that I could delay this inevitability, if only by a little. As I finished a post-cleaning stretch, I moseyed towards the door, mentally preparing myself for whoever could want my attention, asking myself what could possibly go wrong. Well... the answer was not what I was expecting, let's say that much.

I looked down as I opened the door to see Tyler Flare, Maxxie's ten-year-old brother, a very lean and scrawny child who was currently about 1.4 meters tall. He, naturally, resembled his sister quite closely, but I would say that while Maxxie took more after her predominantly Black and Indian father, Tyler took more after his East and Southeast Asian mother. They were both 'ethnic mutts' as Maxxie liked to put it, but I'm just rambling at this point.

Getting back on track, Tyler's hair was in an untamed clump of short hair, and he was wearing a light blue pajama top and some dark pants, both of which were about a size too large for him.

With sleeves covering his hands and his pants rolled up so he did not trip on the legs. It was oddly cute if I may be completely honest. Though, not so much that I couldn't see the concern on his face as he began speaking to me in a muted whisper.

"Uh, hey sis... Can I talk to you... about something?"

"Sure thing Ty, you wanna talk in your room?" I asked, using Maxxie's pet name for the boy.

While his reaction was delayed, he did return with a steady nod, asking me to join him as we walked down the second-floor hallway. We walked past the empty room of Maxxie's parents, Kenneth and Eleanore, who were out on a business trip— as they were 50% of the time— and into Tyler's room. Compared to Maxxie's, it looked like something from a catalog. It was very open, clean, and minimalistic. There were a few figurines placed in the room, a framed *Steven Universe* poster, and a series of plastic containers that were all labeled and placed neatly on a shelf. It was overall a pleasant room and reminded me a bit of my own if I were to get rid of a few things.

Tyler and I sat on his bed as I looked at him with concern. His normally adorable face was stricken with unrest. Seeing as how I had known him for his entire life, I felt like I should be able to figure out what was bothering him. Sadly, I had zero idea what could be troubling him.

"I've been thinking about... the future." Tyler muttered as I scooped closer to him.

"C'mon, what exactly has got you so glum, chum?" I asked, trying to lighten him up.

"I've been thinking about middle school, and puberty, and..."

"Ty, I guess it is pretty scary, your body changes and people can be real butt holes when their hormones are going bonkers, but you're strong enough to face any challenge that comes your way! So just go for it, not worrying about your peers or cliques or any of that malarkey. Just be yourself and aim for making the most of your youth! And by the time you are a man, you will be all the stronger and better adjusted for it."

As I spoke, I tried to lace in whatever Maxxie-esque motivational sayings I could to raise Tyler's spirits. ...But he still looked down at the floor, his face locked in a frown.

"I don't want to be a *man*."

As those words escaped their lips, Tyler distanced himself from me as I stared at them, dazed by their response.

“What— um, do you mean you’re— and I’m not trying to rain on your festival of fun times and fill it with the frowns. And I’d hate to be the despair bug that crawls up the drain and through your pee stream into your privates. But are you getting at—”

I was stammering, trying to maintain my facade as the conversation took a direction I did not expect. But just as I began putting one and three to get four, Tyler said it, clear as day.

“I think I’m transgender,” Tyler said as *she* began to cry.

“I... I’ve known you all your life, seen you grow so much over the years, been with you through the best and the worst, and... I love you Tyler. Boy or girl, that’s not changing, and if this is what you really want, I’m right there with you, buddy.”

As I discarded the facade of forced Maxxie-isms, I moved closer to Tyler, embracing her in a firm hug.

“T-Thanks Maxxie... I guess I should’ve expected as much, but...” Tyler muttered as she cried into my sleeves.

Those words were like weights dragging my person down to the bottom of a watery abyss. This was such an emotional moment for Tyler, coming out to her sister, but... I wasn’t her sister. And while I knew it was outlandish to say the truth at a time like now, I did it anyway.

“Um... The thing about that is... I— I’m not actually Maxxie.”

“Wh-what?” Tyler muttered as she rubbed her tear-soaked eyes.

“...I... I shouldn’t have said that you have a lot on your mind and... I guess this is actually sorta appropriate, in a weird way. I, well... I’m actually Jad. Maxxie and I swapped bodies a couple of hours ago.”

I immediately regretted my decision to tell her the truth.

“Maxxie, I...”

“No, Tyler, this is not a joke. I am being completely serious right now, Maxxie and I— well, I, as in Jad, was given a body switching remote from some woman by the name of Verde. Maxxie thought it would be *fun* if we switched bodies for the night, and I’m guessing that she didn’t think you would come out as a transgirl tonight of all nights...”

As I spoke, I adopted a cadence unlike the one Maxxie used. I tried to sound like myself, in hopes of her believing my bullshit, yet true, story.

“I...” Tyler began.

“Yes, I know it sounds like bullshit Tyler, but I have proof! I have the VD and... wait, no, I... I left it at my house.”

“...I’d like it if you’d call me Terra from now on.” She requested as she looked up at me.

“Oh— s-sure... T-Terra. So, do you believe me or am—”

“I believe you. You look just like her, but... I know you, Jad, and I know my sister. And you *definitely* aren’t my sister.”

“Oh, well, um... Listen, this is a really, really big change in your life, and I think— I’m sure you do realize that, right?”

“Yes, I did my homework and made sure this is what I really wanted. I’ve been thinking about it since third grade, and I... was really hoping that Maxxie could help me out.” Terra told me as she fiddled with her fingers.

“Well, I... We should switch back tomorrow morning, I’ll call her and make sure, but for now... You’re a really brave person to be doing something like this, and I’m happy to see you take such initiative with your life. I’ve known you since you were a week old. And I really do want to see you be happy. ...I don’t really know much about this stuff, but I think you should tell Babs, Eleanore, and Kenneth on Thanksgiving, because they’re normally really busy up until Christmas, right?” I said as I brought myself closer to Terra.

“Yeah,” Terra nodded.

“And then, by the time 2015 comes rising up from the eternal horizon, you will get all you need to start your hormone replacement therapy— or at least get some blockers. With your lady levels increased, you’ll prep yourself for a middle school life not as the Tyler Flare people knew you as before, but as the new and mighty Terra Turbo Flare!”

As I adopted this boisterous tone and channeled Maxxie’s mannerisms once more, I lifted Terra off her bed and raised her up high. ...Except I did not have the strength needed to hold up a child in my current body and wound up fumbling back onto the bed, where Terra toppled onto my belly.

“Hehehe, I don’t think that Maxxie could have said it better herself, Jad.” Terra said as she looked at me with a loving expression.

"No problem, I just said what came naturally, and... if you want to test out the VD with Maxxie tomorrow, I'm sure she'd be totally down with it. But first, I should really call her. And I'm really, really, really *super sorry* if I made this far more awkward than it needed to be. It's just that—"

"It's not your fault... Jad. But, I... I have a *lot* I want to think about before bed."

As Terra started wiping away her tears, I left the room and made my way back to Maxxie's room. Once inside, I leaned against a wall, sliding down it as I let out a *massive* sigh of relief. I took a moment to decompress, staring at the violet walls of this room and the ceiling fan overhead before I remembered that I should *probably* give Maxxie a call. So I grabbed Maxxie's phone and called her, not even thinking about *how* I would explain what happened these past 10 minutes.

"What's the word, my dear thunderbird?" Maxxie asked as she answered my phone.

"I'll just get to the important stuff, okay?" I said with a distinct dryness in my voice.

"What happened? Tyler walked in when you were checking out your goods? I swear, that boy never knocks loud enough for me to hear over my jams."

"That's, um, that's what I want to talk to you about. Tyler came out to me."

"Oh, so my little bro-bro's into boys? Eh, I was hoping my pansexuality would rub off on him, but at least it's cooler than being hetero like... 80 percent of the world."

"Well, coming out has a couple of meanings, at least I thought it did, and calling Tyler— even calling them Tyler is—"

"*Wait, what?* My bro-bro wants to be my sis-sis... actually, that sounds dumb— Not the T-Girl thing, of course, that's *flat out awesome*, just the name I done conjured up there... And the gears just clunked in the right fashion, and I now realize what must've gone *wrong* with this whole shebang."

"Yeah, I kinda told Tyler— Terra— as she wants to be called now, that I'm actually Jad. I went along with it for a while, but..."

"Oh snap, that must've been super duper awkward... is Terra alright?"

"Terra's, well, she was shaken up, so I can't really say yes. She's not a mess, as far as I know, but..."

"Man, I really wish I was there to comfort her and give her some sisterly loving, but I'm guessing you *tried* at the very least, right?"

“Yeah, I think I helped her, but she probably needs some one-on-one time with you. Seeing as how it’s... 21:30, I figure we’ll wait until tomorrow.” I explained to Maxxie as I laid on her bed.

“Yeah, let’s get together in half a day exactly, *capeesh?*”

“Sounds good, but what about—”

“Shiaka and Zoe are still lined up for an 11:00 get together, right? I’ll text them in a bit.”

“No, I just wanted to know what I should wear, I guess,” I explained as I looked into her massive closet, a prime example of her supposed ‘organized chaos.’

“Hmm... my new stuff is still a day or two away, so... For tonight, get yourself all bundled up in that hoodie with the word ‘youth’ on it, pick out a skirt from my drawer, ‘cos you should lap up the feels they offer. Just don’t forget the modesty shorts and ‘specially the panty. *Oh*, and get some leggings to keep yourself from getting them chills. For tomorrow the twenty-third, you ought to scavenge for an outfit you’ve seen me wear a couple of times. Violet sweater, that navy dress thingy, some blue and pink stockings— the striped ones of course, and... ah. Try to find that dragonfly hairpin you got me years and years ago, but be sure you brush my hair before you try getting all stylish.”

That was approximately... 2000% more detailed than what I expected Maxxie to say: ‘Something sexy.’

“I— um, okay,” I said as I began scavenging about her closet for the clothing she described.

“And you already got yourself cleaned up, right?”

“No, not yet... and I cleaned up your room, so I’m a little sweaty... not that the tense situation with Terra helped much.” I replied, knowing *exactly* what she was going to say.

“Hop right to it then! Oh, and you can still fap if you want to. This whole Terra thing shouldn’t ruin your night if you were hoping to get your Flare on.”

“It... It’s fine, I don’t feel like masturbating as a girl after comforting a transgender ten-year-old, Maxxie.” I explained to her.

“...Yeah, that’s fair, I guess. I just didn’t want to be the only one who masturbated when in each other’s bods. I did it twice so far, fixing to nab some *hot milk* before bed, and I’m jotting down a morning quickie into my schedule. I *must* invest-i-ma-gate that mysterious morning man-wood.”

“Goldarn. At this rate, you’re going to wind up masturbating more times than I have in my entire life. I just hope you haven’t made a mess.”

“No worries, I found some baggies in the kitchen that keep things mess-free. Although, I’m sure I’d like doing it in the shower too. Hehehehe.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow, bye Maxxie!” I said as I ended our call, not wanting to have our *seventieth* conversation about cum.

Verde: *Did you count the exact number or are you exaggerating?*

Well, aren’t you supposed to be an omnipotent, as in all-seeing, being? You should know the answer to that question.

Verde: *Heh, I suppose that I could answer my own question there. It’s a bit of a problem I have, figuring out how to make good jokes.*

Actually, seeing as we are at a stopping point, I have to ask you something, Verde.

Verde: *Shoot.*

Are there any other people like you?

Verde: *There was one... they are no longer alive. They were an awful and deplorable monster who greatly abused their powers... Oh, I almost forgot! Goodness, where are my manners? Could I get you something Jad? A drink, a snack, maybe some sweets?*

There’s a reason why I’m borderline underweight, you know. And my attention span isn’t *that* bad.

Verde: *Look... I will explain everything once we complete this session, okay?*

Do I really have a choice *but* to go through with this?

Verde: *Yes, yes you do. In fact, I... right, you were a bit flustered at the time. Behind you, there is a door. You may walk out of it if you wish to no longer partake in this experiment of mine. That said, your memories of me, and this adventure of yours, will all vanish and you will be none the wiser.*

Oh, I never even thought to look behind this chair... But I’ll stay if that’s the case. I’d hate for an experience like this to go to waste...

Session 05: It's Slippery When Wet



Now, where was I? Right, the shower... Before I continue, I feel as if there is something that I... I mentioned it, but I have not properly emphasized how much pressure I felt when I was in Maxxie's original body. There were moments where I almost forgot that I was in this body, but with every major movement, I was reminded of my current state. Whenever I spoke I had an increasingly brief moment of concern that I would misuse my current voice. Whenever I walked, I wondered if I was walking properly, or if I looked like two dogs in a people suit.

It was nerve-racking, awkward, and at the same time strangely invigorating. There was a certain taboo aspect to everything that sent my heart racing and sent some dopamine coursing through my brain whenever I managed to pull something off. Not that I should have felt that way. There was nothing wrong with what Maxxie and I were doing, and I had her permission to enjoy this situation as much as I could.

This train of thought occupied my mind as I was in the bathroom, getting ready to shower. It's something of a habit of mine. Using the privacy and isolated nature of the bathroom to ponder certain things, thinking more deeply and analytically than I normally do. I'm not sure why I do this, but here I think it was my own way of delaying the inevitable. I already felt weird peeing in my current body, and showering struck me as a far more disconcerting experience.

"I saw Maxxie naked plenty of times before. She *wants* me to do this. I don't want to go to bed and be all stinky come Sunday. Plus, Terra will think I'm up to something if the bathroom is closed all night..."

Those sorts of thoughts were just my way of facing the inevitable, which I eventually gave in to.

I began removing my somewhat smelly blue vest over the tight white shirt I had been wearing for the past few hours. I evaded the mirror as I began to strip, dropping my top on the light blue floor tiles as I made a cursory glance at the chest I was embedded with. I briefly gave my left breast a slight poke, but after feeling a distressing chill go up to my spine, I looked past my darker skin-toned bra and decided to take off my leather pants first.

I unbuttoned the tight pants and felt a sense of relief as I was freed from their constrictions, and with the removal of my socks, I was left standing there in nothing but my underwear. Wishing to cease my procrastination, I took a whiff of myself, sending a sour smell blazing through my nostrils. Using this odor as a motivator, I undid the bra and slid down the panty, leaving me completely naked.

Verde: *Mind if I ask why exactly you were so hesitant to look at your naked body? You've explained your hesitation somewhat. Because you are asexual. But asexuality is different than... it almost sounds like you are describing gymnophobia. Is there an elaborate reason for your discontent?*

...I could sit here and talk for *hours upon hours* about various things I think may have influenced my disinterest in the subject matter. Maxxie and I had plenty of debates about this over the years, but never really sat down and did a formal analysis of it. Okay, we *tried*, but Maxxie lost the notes we took over the course of a week where we had this discussion on and off. Yes, I know I am being superficial and there is nothing wrong with what I was doing, but something in the back of my mind kept on holding me back, telling me that what I was doing *was wrong*.

After about a minute of standing in the bathroom, naked, feeling the circulated air brushing against my body in ways I wasn't used to. I began taking deep breaths, mentally confirming that this is indeed my body, at least for the next 11-ish hours. I had *permission* and *encouragement* to take a shower, and I told myself to stop allowing the back of my mind to nag at me with worry.

Tired of delaying the inevitable, I turned on the shower. As the hot water began pouring, I stepped over the bathtub and into the stream of water... almost slipping in the process. I let out a slight laugh in response to nearly bashing my head against a wall. It helped free me of some tension as I grabbed a bottle of liquid soap and a washcloth to do what I needed to.

I went through the process of lathering and cleaning my body, eyes facing the wall or shut as I felt my way around with a soapy washcloth. I enjoyed the feeling of the warm water cascading down on me. The soft texture of the washcloth as it went across my limbs and face. And the

flowery scent of the soap enhanced my mood. Still, that was before I came to the two areas I dreaded. I swiftly wiped my breasts and crotch, as I had *no idea* how to clean them and I did not want to find out through trial and error.

I didn't feel I could take such a *slapdash* approach with the hair, however. As such, I simply grabbed a bottle of shampoo, rubbed it through my hair and scalp, rinsed it, and did the same with a bottle of conditioner. I was not entirely sure if I was missing some *secret vital step*, but I figured it was at least better than nothing. Having completed the cleansing process, and stood long enough to rinse away the cleansing byproducts, I turned off the water, took a second to recognize that I was done, and began... I began examining my body.

I kept my eyes away from my body as I began sending my right hand down to my... lower regions, feeling the area up and eventually sticking my— my index finger inside. I was frightened by the sensation and planted myself up against the shower wall, where I let out a little chuckle. I then moved my other hand towards my left breast and began rubbing its nipple, sending a wave of sensations through myself before I stopped seconds later.

“Okay, okay... That was *interesting*,” I said to myself in a hushed whisper. “You know what, I *don't* need to do this, at least *not now*. I have all the time in the world to try this out, but before I delve down that rabbit hole... shit, that was a pun, wasn't it? Anyway, I won't go deeper down this well, and will go about my night without any... *fapping* of any kind. I'll explain this to Maxxie, that I tried and, yeah, tonight is a bad night to try anyhow.”

With that, I exited the shower, rubbed a towel against my person to dry myself off, and began the process of getting ready for bed. My sleep clothes consisted of a graphic tee that I didn't really get, a gray hoodie with the word ‘youth’ printed on it, a green cotton skirt that went to my knees, and some white stockings. I brushed my teeth, enjoying Maxxie's Strawberry flavored toothpaste, before taking out a hair dryer and drying my hair. I had only ever done it a few times before— never with this much hair.

After tending to my hair, drying it and brushing it, I looked at myself in the mirror. I was met with the sight of a round-faced young Blasian girl with freckles sprinkled over her face and silky black hair. It was Maxxie, but she looked... better than she usually did. It made me wonder why Maxxie so rarely ever chose to groom herself, as she really is quite a cute girl when she tries.

Verde: *You were quite a cute girl.*

Well, I had the body of a really cute girl. If this was a forever thing and I was stuck in Maxxie's body, that may have been true, but as I said, this only lasted four days.

Anyhow, as I was making my way out of the bathroom, I thought about going to see Terra to give her some words of encouragement before bed. However, my nervousness got the better of

me, and I instead made my way to Maxxie's bedroom. Not only did I not know what to say, but I was afraid that I would weird out Terra after our last conversation went oh-so *marvelously*.

Then, just as I was opening the door to Maxxie's room, Terra spoke to me.

"Um, hi, Jad," Terra murmured just loud enough for me to hear.

"Oh— hey Terra. Is there anything..." I said, trailing off as I realized I had no clue what I should say.

"Maxxie— she called me while you were in the shower. Did you... *You know*."

"You mean... oh no, no I— I couldn't— yes, *she said I should*, but really in this kind of situation, I don't..." I rambled, hoping that Terra would stop me sooner than later.

"Okay, I just wanted to know. Maxxie— she made a joke about how I should try... *that* before I think about going all the way through with this. She wanted me to compare my... feeling to the way it feels in her body, and I— I just wanted to know." Terra explained, beating around the bush about beating the bush.

"Oh, well, I tried doing it a few times, Maxxie actually was the one who showed me what masturbation was the summer before high school, and I'm not a fan of it. I mean, it offered *some* relief, but that, and intercourse... no, not really interested in that." I said as I became *very afraid* of Babs walking in on this immensely awkward conversation.

"I felt it... harden a few times in school, but I have no idea why. It's pretty random... and scary."

"Well... After you start taking blockers, I think it will stop doing that. I mean, there's nothing wrong with what's going on. It's just that... you don't want it to, but you... Maxxie was ecstatic to hear you tell her that. Not because she necessarily *wanted* you to be trans, but because she loves you and wants you to be happy. I want you to be happy, and your family wants you to be happy... I'm really, really sorry for messing this up for you. I can only imagine what must be going through your head, and... I don't know what else to say."

"Oh... um... T-Thanks, Jad... I'll see you in the morning."

After Terra blissfully ended this conversation, she went back to her room while I retreated to Maxxie's room, where I leaned against her door while stroking my fingers through my hair.

"The fuck is my life now?" I asked myself.

Before I could answer that question, my attention was drawn to Maxxie's phone, where I spied a duo of newly received texts from Zoe and Shiaka, two close friends of Maxxie and myself. They

both said the same basic thing, confirming that we'd meet up at Maxxie's house tomorrow, Sunday, November 23rd, at 11:00. An expected commitment from the two of them, and one that made me preemptively exhausted for what tomorrow would bring, especially after everything that happened today.

"Okay, so I received a mysterious package containing a *freaking* body swapper. I'm about to spend a night as my *female* best friend. And I just had a 10-year-old come out as trans to me, thinking that I was her sister. Now I'm going to introduce this *freaking* body swapper to my other two friends and by 12:00 tomorrow, I will have probably been in all of their bodies. *Ugh!* I won't lie and say that this isn't cool, but why is this happening to me? I'm just some guy and this... this is an opportunity that most trans women would *kill* for. All I wanted to do was enjoy my weekend before a holiday break, and play some video games. I mean, just... why? Why any of this? Why is this my life now?"

As I went about these musings, tossing and turning across Maxxie's bed, I eventually found my eyes locked on the full-length mirror on the back of Maxxie's door. There, I saw the face of an upset looking young woman buried in a thick blanket.

"Shame is only for the most foolish of Jays. Don't let all the bad BS roaming 'round this world of ours ever get you down, as worrying about this and that never helped anybody with anything." I said to myself, quoting something that Maxxie told me years ago.

She was right. I made some mistakes, but there was no need to worry about them now. I could feel bad about the could've's and should've's over the past few hours, but what's done is done, and I figured I should try and help get Maxxie's sleep schedule on track. So I turned off the lights and began thinking about some random bullcrap as I drifted off into dreamland... which took about 45 minutes.

Verde: *...Due to a mix of your own discomforts, the energy coursing through Maxxie's body at any given time, and the fact that you jolted up whenever you felt pressure against your slightly smaller than average breasts.*

...Yes, that's about right, Verde.

Verde: *Please don't take this the wrong way, but do you truly have a problem with nudity?*

I could go on a long story about where this came from. But here's what I'd use as an opening if I were to do the 'in media res' thing when describing the origins of my sexuality, or lack thereof. Back during the summer of 2006, Maxxie and I had just finished third grade, and I had helped her improve her grades so she could get a computer from her parents. She had it for about a week before she and I were browsing around a couple sites, watching flash animations on Newgrounds, and searching for cool fanart of stuff. However, Maxxie ended up disabling safe

search on Google Images when we were looking up *Pokémon* art. And even back then, there was still quite a bit of Rule 34 out there.

What we accidentally stumbled upon was an orgy of various Pokémon and characters from the anime, all of which were given massive dicks or tits, and the entire image was just caked in this *vile web of semen*. I gagged as I saw it while Maxxie just laughed at how absurd the whole thing was. At that moment— right then and there— Babs decided to walk in and bring us some juice boxes. She saw the screen, and... I was not allowed to see Maxxie for five days. ...Then, one day later, she snuck into my room at night and we had a ‘secret sleepover’ before falling asleep in the same bed.

Verde: *You are omitting a few details there. Namely ones involving your father, who you clearly dislike.*

Yes, part of that reason is because my father— no, he does not *deserve* that title. Bryce, Bryce Novus, interpreted this story his own way. He thought I was the one who brought up the picture and showed it to Maxxie, scarring her ‘young impressionable girl mind.’ I was punched in the face, and my mother didn’t let me leave the house for a few days because my eye was messed up pretty badly.

Verde: *And seeing as how you were unfamiliar with sexual imagery, your brain interpreted sexual imagery, and sexual things by extension, as inherently bad?*

I... I might have... accidentally caught a whiff or porn back when I was five probably helped as well... Look, sexual things generally make me uncomfortable, despite seeing a lot of Maxxie’s SSD, her ‘Super Sexy (hard-on) Drive,’ of drawn pornography and hentai doujins. I would be much happy if I never saw a naked person again, as the majority of humans associate that with sex, myself included. ...I have other stories I could tell, but we still have three more days to recap.

Session 06: T-Girl Trouble



I get that we have all the time in the world and then some, but can I skim through what happened during Sunday morning?

Verde: *Hmm... I suppose my request for you to describe every little detail was a bit much, and you have proven yourself to be a very detail-oriented person. So yes, you may skim through the events of the morning of November 23, 2014.*

In that case, I grumbled as my eyes began opening and I twisted around my blanket. The violet walls were the first indication that I was in Maxxie's room, and according to the bright blue light of a clock Maxxie kept on the other side of her room, it was 7:37. I began moving myself upright, when a clump of black hair floated into my field of view. I briefly wondered what it was, but with a yawn and a brief look down at the hoodie I slept in, I got the reminder I was looking for.

I contemplated where I should begin in resuming Maxxie's life for the next 100 minutes or so. But before my mind could decide, my body hit me with a sensation that sent me to the bathroom, where I began my day by freshening up. From peeing, which I *already* described in detail. Brushing my teeth, which was uncannily different on account of the minute ways in which mine and Maxxie's teeth were arranged. To maintaining my hair once again, after it morphed into a tumbleweed overnight. I'll admit that reshaping the hair was *slightly* annoying, but Maxxie's original body looked far better with more kempt hair. So I'd say it was worth it.

After lathering my face with a washcloth, I gave myself a grin as I looked in the mirror.

“You know, I really don’t mind this as much as I thought I would.” I said to myself, trying very hard to match Maxxie’s exact tone and pitch. “I mean, yes, this wasn’t the best outcome I could have gotten, but I’d be down with doing this again. I don’t really like the social interactions that much, but who can blame me? Acting like somebody you’re not just feels wrong, especially when you need to do a one-eighty from introvert to extrovert. But the body... it reminds me of a feel-good comfy quilt... Yeah, I really love Maxxie-isms like that, but they never sound right with my voice. Or my original voice, I guess... I should probably go change.”

With that, I went to Maxxie’s bedroom to put on the outfit Maxxie requested I wear today. A violet sweater, a navy overall dress, and some pink and blue striped stockings, with a dragonfly hairpin, because it looked cute. Yes, the outfit was a bit silly when put together, but it had a weird sense of style to it that I actually liked, and I felt like letting Maxxie know that. So, taking my first ever selfie, I sent her a picture of myself in her original body, saying I liked the outfit in a follow-up message.

By the time I finished, Babs opened my door. She was dressed far more plainly than I was at the moment, wearing a long-sleeved cream-colored V-neck and some jeans, and looked rather surprised to see ‘Maxxie’ up and about this early in the morning.

“Huh, you’re already dressed?” Babs asked as she crossed her arms.

“I sure as sugar didn’t stay up for the entire night if that’s what your worry is. I got a good eight hours in Dreamland and everything.” I said while sticking up my nose.

“And can I expect this from you every night?”

“Eh, I don’t wanna make any promises like that.”

“Heh, I figured as much. Breakfast’s ready whenever you are, but I think Tyler’s still asleep if you wanna wake him up for a change.”

After giving me that mission, Babs left Maxxie’s room, unaware of the Tyler/Terra stuff from last night.

I promptly followed Babs on the way out of Maxxie’s room, and made my way to wake up ‘my’ sister. I saw her bundled up in her covers, curled up into a ball and looking very peaceful as the morning sun pierced through her window and onto her person. I smiled as I watched her sleep soundly, before giving her a little nudge.

“Terra, come on. It’s time to get up.” I said in a sing-song tone.

She quickly began moving around and fluttering her eyes open, eventually letting out a silent yawn as she began to wiggle out of her covers. It took her a few seconds to get to the point where she began greeting me, but as the words began to form in her mouth, her eyes jolted open.

“Oh... good morning Maxxie. I had a pretty weird dream last night.”

“Actually, assuming that dream involved me *not really* being Maxxie, and you coming out as transgender to me, then I believe that wasn’t a dream, Terra.”

“...*Crap*. Sorry, I just thought that everything sounded a bit... weird when I remembered it.”

Terra turned away from me as she remembered I was not who I appeared to be.

“Maxxie should be back in about an hour and a half, but in the meantime, let’s get some breakfast, okay?” I said with a wink and a grin.

“S-Sure... *Jad*.”

With that conversation out of the way, Terra and I moseyed on downstairs to have ourselves some breakfast. We both shared some toast and eggs in relative silence, seeing as how Babs was within earshot, eating some fruit as she read a book. The food was good, the atmosphere was thick, and I was honestly rushing through it near the end so I could scoot my way out of the kitchen and back into Maxxie’s room.

Once there... I got onto Maxxie’s computer, closed her e-hentai tabs, and checked my usual sites. ...Except it was a *Sunday*, and no news *ever* dropped on a Sunday. With nothing else to do, I decided to grab Maxxie’s copy of *Super Smash Bros. for Wii U* and kill some time by unlocking a few characters.

Verde: *And what exactly was her basement like?*

I was getting to that. Maxxie’s basement was refurbished a couple years ago, so it looked quite nice. The walls were encompassed with shelves full of books, movies, games, books, small boxes, and so forth. In the midst of all this storage rested an L-shaped couch that could easily fit six people, facing a television of adequate size. The TV itself had a variety of color-coded cables coming from it, each of which corresponded to one of the many game consoles placed in a fixture under the screen. Normally there were only about three systems plugged in at a time. But things got hectic and cluttered due to a lack of backward compatibility from eighth-generation game consoles.

Ignoring the PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, PlayStation TV, the Xbox 360, and the Xbox One, I made my way to the innocuous white box known as the Wii U. I turned it on, put the disc in, and began connecting the GameCube controller adapter before digging through a box to find Maxxie's old GameCube controllers.

Verde: *I have context for what all those things are, but assuming one does not, that sounds like a very needlessly complex string of nonsense. You have a PlayStation 3 plugged into a TV... but that is different than a PlayStation TV.*

Yeah, hence why I don't bring them up to people out of the loop. Video games *should* be relatively simple, but the medium is lousy with stupid jargon and needlessly complex terminology. But they are also a wonderful and innovative art form that regularly approaches greatness, so it is worth internalizing the rubbish.

Anyhow, after getting the game set up, and adjusting my dress so I could comfortably sit on the couch, I was interrupted by the sound of the doorbell, which rang throughout the entire house. Putting five and two together, I realized that it must be Maxxie in my body, so I promptly ran up the stairs.

By the time I got to the front door, Babs had already greeted her. Regardless, I approached her, smiling, eager to catch up with her, only to have my expression sour as I saw what Maxxie had decided to wear today. It was a *very* bright red polo shirt and a pair of jeans. Two pieces of clothing I did not recall *owning*, and would not wear even if I did. I never really wore warmer colors, found the idea of wearing short-sleeved clothing in the winter to be *baffling*, and had developed a distaste for jeans. Mostly due to the buttons, divots, and zippers that I had found to be uncomfortable. It just made me think about my crotch too darn much...

Seeing as how Babs was right next to us, I didn't say much to Maxxie, and instead brought her down to the basement, along with Terra, who heard the doorbell from her bedroom. After the three of us were in a mostly isolated room together and gathered around the couch, Maxxie began to dig through my backpack, clearly struggling to find something.

"Please don't tell me you forgot it," I murmured.

"I didn't forget nothing, I just— ah, there we go!" Maxxie said before pulling out the remote responsible for our current predicament.

"So, that thing's the body swapping remote?" Terra asked as she looked at the violet device.

"Yep, and 'fore I show you what it's like to be a lady in both *body* and *mind*, I'd like to have a moment as myself."

Maxxie then promptly pointed the VD towards her current body and pressed button one, aimed the remote at me to press button two, and then pressed Go. As expected, there was a feeling of disembodiment, a loss of my senses, and I soon found myself back in my original body. I began examining myself, moving about my hands and so forth, just making sure that everything was right, even though I felt more uncomfortable sitting down than I normally did.

The shirt was a size too small for me and its material clung tightly against my chest, while my jeans were a bit too tight in some places and too loose in others. They also were a bit short and barely went down to my ankles where I stood up. Thinking back, they were probably Maxxie's a couple of years ago, but she forgot them, mixed them with my clothes, and I guess my mother assumed that they were my pants.

But before I could voice my irritation, Maxxie let out a loud “Wahoo!” as she began twirling around in her body, feeling up her breasts and butt.

“Ah, it’s good to be home! So how about you Jad? Hell, how was your voyage on the S. S. Maxxisaurus Omega Flare?” Maxxie asked while checking herself out.

“So, that thing *really* works?” Terra asked as she looked at us in amazement.

“Heck yeah, it does... um... sis-sis still doesn’t sound as good, so... I guess just Terra for now, alright, sis? I’ll come up with something in a couple of days.”

“I’m more than happy with just Terra, sis.”

Terra and Maxxie then embraced each other in a sisterly hug. I smiled as I looked on at them, but I couldn’t deny that I felt a bit guilty about this whole situation. After all, they would have been able to experience this last night if not for me...

“Jad, not to be a jerk, but do you think you can give my sis and me a bit of bonding time?” Maxie asked as she grabbed the VD from my hands.

“Sure, it’s the least I can do for messing up your... you know.”

“Oh please, J-Star, it was a classic example of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. You have nothing to feel bad about.”

“Thanks, Maxxie. You two head upstairs. In the meantime, I’ll unlock a few characters, okay?” I said, gesturing to the GameCube controllers on the couch.

Maxxie then ran off with her newly dubbed sister, thanking me as I stayed in the basement for about an hour, where nothing noteworthy happened.

Verde: *Seeing as how the next series of events is a bit... jumbled, I would say it is time for another brief break. But tell me, if you have such a close relationship with Maxxie and her sister, did you really feel the need to distance yourself from them?*

They are my family as far as I am concerned, but that does not mean I feel I should not give them some alone time. Plus, I wanted to... mentally prepare for Zoe and Shiaka, who, once again, were set to arrive at 11:00.

Verde: *I couldn't help but notice that you did not express a lot of joy to return to your own body.*

...I'm comfortable as myself, it's just that I did not mind being in Maxxie's body, and my comfort was a bit disrupted by the wardrobe I was given. I had a pair of pajamas at Maxxie's house, but I didn't think to change into them, and as such stayed in Maxxie's old jeans and shirt. Not that she remembered owning them at any point in time.

Verde: *So, you technically crossdressed, didn't you?*

Are you trying to get a story out of me? I'm sure you already know it.

Verde: *Oh, I do, but I would like to hear your take on it.*

If that's the case, during a little vacation Maxxie and I went on during the summer of... 2008, right before we would have begun sixth grade, she found a big book about everything under the LGBT banner. Based on that, she thought it would be fun if we crossdressed as each other on our first day of middle school by wearing each other's uniform. Maxxie, or rather Maxie with one X is a male name, and Jad can be read as an alternate spelling of Jade. Combine this with the fact that our middle school didn't have a ton of carryover from our elementary school, and teachers could assume that Jad Novus was a girl and Maxxie Flare was a boy.

Based on how adamant Maxxie was about the idea, I agreed and received a full 'makeover' from her. I actually came out looking pretty darn cute if I do say so myself. Maxxie, not afraid of walking the line of feminine and masculine, was able to come across as a boy pretty easily, and even nailed a deeper voice with no issue, while I had some difficulty with a higher voice. *Thanks testosterone.*

We went through the day with, honestly, zero issues at all— which was not what we were expecting. It made the second day really awkward when we came to school dressed in our gender-appropriate uniforms, and we ended up getting in trouble. It was pretty embarrassing, but Zoe, who was our friend at that point, was able to use cold, hard logic. Which was enough to stop a couple of jerks from picking on us for "expressing our youthful freedoms and taking advantage of an experimental point in one's life." Or something along those lines.

Verde: *And you crossdressed at later points in time, didn't you?*

...A couple of times, but Maxxie and I never really made a habit of it, and we certainly never tried it in public after the first time. Plus, puberty affects boys and girls differently, and it's easier to come across as the other gender as a kid.

Verde: *The other gender, implying there are only two?*

For the love of... Yes, yes, gender is a fluid concept and I messed up. However, I only messed up because there are *primarily* two genders in society. Some people like to mix and match—they like to *fuck with gender*—and I think they are cool, quirky people. I think it is great that people are messing with norms like this. It's just that the language these people use to express themselves is still developing, and it can be impenetrable at the moment. People are still trying to agree on terms, on new pronouns, and it's all this convoluted mess of language. Well, assuming you learn about most of this stuff from Tumblr.

I know that *eventually* the language will evolve. I just wish that some of the people pushing for this stuff were a bit more patient and realized that... “the wheels of justice grind slowly, but they're moving.” They are *always* moving.

Verde: *Are you done quoting mid-nineties Full Motion Video adventure games about cyberpunk serial killers?*

Are there more than *one* of those in existence? Regardless, yes. I just needed to get that out of my system.

Session 07: All The Warriors



At 11:00, I heard a barrage of footsteps coming down the basement stairs. Standing up from the couch, I saw an enthusiastic Terra, a nervous Maxxie, a befuddled Zoe, and a shifty Shiaka.

For visual reference, Zoe Xing is a very fit and tall young man, roughly 1.92 meters tall, and weighing a pretty lean 72 kilograms. As the last name should signify, his father was Chinese, and he takes after him in regards to appearance. Yet he does carry a few features, namely his hazel eyes, from his mother, who originally hailed from Ukraine. He was looking very sharp, as he often does, wearing a nice dark gray button-down and some ironed white pants. His hair was sharp and had a mild sheen from the gel he applied every morning, and his rectangular glasses fit well on his face. He had an air of maturity to him that often had people mistake him for somebody fresh out of college and ready to pounce his way up the corporate ladder. When in reality, he was only 17.

His maturity also carried over with his intelligence, as he was wise beyond his years and maintained a 4.0 out of 4.0 GPA, getting straight A's in all of his classes. And not just because he studied, but he internalized the information and always stayed one step beyond most of his peers.

Verde: *So, he's a strapping young man named Zo-e?*

No. There is a reason why I have been pronouncing Zoe so it would rhyme with Joe, foe, doe, no, so, toe, and so forth. Because that is how his name is supposed to be pronounced. His parents read the name Zoe, assumed its pronunciation, and believed that it was a male equivalent of the name Zoey, when in reality it is merely an alternate spelling. The same thing happened with my mother when she was naming me. She read the name Jad, and interpreted it as a male variant of Jade. Instead of a name that rhymes with had, sad, mad, bad, clad, pad, rad, tad, et cetera.

Jad is *technically* a male name— an Arabic name at that— but most people just read Jad as Jade, just like how they read Zoe as Zoey. As victims of the *same mistake*, we frequently deal with situations where people read our names and assume we are female. Especially when dealing with new teachers. It just goes to show you that research is *paramount* when naming a child.

Verde: *I love how rehearsed that explanation sounds.*

Trust me. *It is.* Moving on....

Shiaka Kurokawa, that is ‘she-ah-kuh kurr-oh-kah-wah,’ by contrast, was a good foot shorter than Zoe at 1.57 meters tall, and was light enough to be picked up with relative ease at 43 kilograms. Once more, her last name implies a Japanese father, which is the case. But despite what people often thought based on her shoulder-length blonde hair and blue eyes, her mother is actually Mexican. Yes, it is *completely possible*, just *incredibly unlikely* for non-Caucasian people to have recessive genes like those.

Lineage aside, she was a very cute young woman with an adorable face, a calming aura, and overall came across as a very innocent person who would not harm a fly. At the time, she was wearing a cream-colored sweater dress, with a white belt above the waist, and some wool navy stockings underneath it all.

Verde: *She also had ‘assets’ that were a bit large given her stature...*

...She has C-cup breasts, as Maxxie informed me two years ago, which are within the realm of average, just a bit large for a person as petite as her.

Beyond her appearance, she was also a ridiculously smart person. She was home schooled from a young age, and she not only triumphed in just about anything academic, but was also a skilled programmer. So skilled that she *breezed* past whatever computer science classes our school had to offer and spent most of the class time making game prototypes.

Getting back to the story, Terra, who was leading the group, had changed out of their pajamas and into a bright yellow T-shirt and jeans. An outfit I read as out-of-character for her, but it all suddenly made sense once I saw her holding the VD in her hand. I assumed that Maxxie must

have swapped with her sister, and remained so, which was made all but obvious once the quartet entered the basement and Terra's body began to speak with the bravado one would expect of Maxxie.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have brought you here today for a very special announcement! The other day Jad and I discovered this marvelous device that will surely send mankind skyrocketing into *the great tomorrow*! For you see, despite my appearance, I am not the Tyler Flare you may see me as. In actuality, I am truly the one, the only..."

At the cusp of this dramatic pause, Maxxie leaned a finger over to the Go button on the VD, and after a moment of lag, began to resume speaking once more, returning to the comfort of her original body.

"Maxxisaurus Omega Flare!" She shouted at Shiaka and Zoe, both of whom looked at her with perplexed expressions.

"...Maxxie, that transition didn't even make sense. What were you trying to do?"

"I dunno, I was being impulsive and experimental, but this ex-pire-ment was quite the dud if I do say so myself."

"What are you three going on about?" Zoe asked, the irritation seeping through his deeper than average voice.

"Oh, Jad and I found a body switcher yesterday, we spent the night as each other, and we invited you over to come and check it out. I mean, I figured being in each other's skin and cloth-stuff would be a hell lot more rad than just about anything else we can diddle up and do." Maxxie said with a straight face to our baffled friends.

"W-Wait is this a joke, or did you really..." Shiaka stammered, her voice soft and whispery.

"It's no joke! Just give me the word and I can switch our brains with a few button presses," Maxxie said as she waved the VD about.

"Jad, can you confirm her claims?" Zoe asked with a discernible dryness.

"Yes. I know it sounds like a load, but she is not lying. I really did spend the night in her body... Oh for— *you know what I mean!*" I said, embarrassed by my unintentional innuendo.

"If it is real, you would be able to exchange Zoe's body with mine and vice versa, right?" Shiaka asked, looking up at Zoe for a brief second.

“Sure, though I guess it would be more accurate to say that your minds would get switched, not your bodies. As a warning, you may feel a bit of a jolt when I press buttons one and two.” Maxxie said before she pressed both buttons, and the two expected names lit up on the VD.

“Ah— Did, um, did you feel something, Zoe?” Shiaka asked.

“Yes, I did... Maxxie does this—” Zoe began, only to have the pressing of the Go button bring his thought to a stop.

The two then stood there for a second, their arms fell to their sides, eyes shut, mouths agape, and their bodies grew rigid. However, a mere second later, they both regained some composure. Their eyes darted around the room, heads turned, and when they turned to one another, mumbling to one another, they realized what Maxxie had done.

Verde: *Before you continue, Jad, I know where this is going, and I feel as if you should change how you refer to people now that there will be far more body swapping.*

What exactly are you getting at?

Verde: *Quite simply, perhaps you should call Zoe, while they are in Shiaka’s body, Zoe(S), and call Shiaka in Zoe’s body Shiaka(Z).*

Hmm... I see your point. Otherwise, it would get pretty confusing who’s who and whatnot. I’ll do so from now on.

Now then, right as the two appeared to get their bearings, Maxxie whipped out the VD once more, and... I like the term register, so I’ll use that. She registered Shiaka(Z) and myself, quickly switching us as part of a plan that, in retrospect, was risky if only because we had not experimented with more complicated multi-body swaps like this one. Thankfully, nothing out of the expected happened. I was hit with the VD, felt a jolt, and soon lost and regained my senses while in another body.

However, before I could even look down at my body, my attention was drawn to what was happening directly in front of me. Zoe(S) grabbing Maxxie by the shoulders, his hands shaking as he tightened a grip with his dainty fingers.

“Maxxie, where did you get that remote?” Zoe(S) shakily asked, his meek voice struggling to sound deep..

“I dunno. Somebody named Verde made it and it was on Jad’s doorstep. I’d say it was some kind of accident, but the box had Jad’s name on it, so either they meant a different Jad Novus or this Verde figured Jad deserved a doohickey this delightful.”

As I overheard Maxxie's explanation, I could not help but drift my attention past the piece of glass placed in front of my eyes, and toward my current body. It was notably taller than before, giving me an unfamiliar viewpoint, and with even a simple movement of my right arm, I could tell that I had far more strength than I was accustomed to. It was empowering to a sense, being able to feel such strength and stature by simply standing and performing rudimentary bodily motions. Yet right as I began thinking positively about being in Zoe's original body, I then felt arm and leg hair brushing gingerly against the clothes I was wearing.

You see, I *really* dislike body hair. For years I've made it a habit to shave it every few days, and I even visited an electrologist to permanently remove my facial hair. While I can, in some way, understand the visual appeal of facial hair, I have always found body hair unsightly, and generally uncomfortable to have.

My negative views of the matter likely originate from Bryce and his awful habits of wearing revealing clothes, specifically tank tops and shorts, during the summer, exposing his unmaintained bodily hair to all passersby. It is an ugly aspect of the human body to me, and one that I am hoping to rid myself of once I accumulate the savings necessary to permanently be rid of it.

Beyond the yucky body hair, Zoe's athletic body was further constrained by the clothes he had put on today. They certainly looked good on him, accentuating the professional and mature air he had since I met him in grade school. But from the perspective of the wearer, they did not feel good. They were too tight in some places, too loose in others, and struck me as an indication that he needed to get his clothes tailored, or possibly change the size he was buying.

As I continued absentmindedly musing over my new form, I phased out from the conversation before me and only reconnected to it once I heard my name.

"Jad, you don't have any idea why you would receive something like this, *do you?*" Zoe(S) asked, talking to my original body.

"Um, I— Whoa, that's pretty deep," I began, getting accustomed to my more masculine voice. "I'm actually in your body at the moment, Zoe. Shiaka's in mine."

As I observed Zoe(S) darting his eyes around, trying to get a grip on who was who, I noticed Maxxie whipping out the VD in order to switch her and Terra's bodies once again.

"Alright then," Maxxie(T) said from her little sister's body, "now everybody's swapped, although, maybe I should rethink my order a bit. It seems like a waste to have Shiaka and Zoe here and not be in either of their bodies, but... nah. I'm fine being my little sis for another couple hours."

"Wait— oh my, that's a bit... wait, your little sister?" Shiaka(J) stammered as she adjusted to speaking in a lower octave.

“Ah, right, I let the cat out of the bag, didn’t I? Yeah, on top of discovering a thing that could easily change the future and bring about a dystopia where identities are meaningless. Sweet little Tyler, or rather *Terra*, came out to Jad while he was rocking it in my bod, saying that *she was transgender*.” Maxxie(T) recounted, trying to make her little sister’s voice sound as feminine as possible near the end.

“That— That’s great for her, but not the most interesting topic at hand. Do you even know how this thing works?” Zoe(S) asked as he rubbed his hand through his blonde hair.

“No. Maxxie was pretty clueless as to how this thing worked. Do you know anything else about this, Jad?” Terra(M) asked while playing with the straps of her dress.

“I... I don’t know anything. Verde sent us a CD-ROM with a FLAC file on it. I played it, and a computerized voice explained to me that this device was a revolutionary doohickey, but little if anything substantial or meaningful beyond that, and the fact that it was called the VD.”

After hearing my limited answer, Shiaka(J) grabbed the VD, looking over the device in an attempt to understand it.

“Hmm... I can’t see any sort of opening. I should be able to take it apart if I had the right tools to break the casing and examine the circuitry inside. But in doing so, we might also damage the device...” Shiaka(J) pondered as she fiddled with the VD.

“Actually, *comma*, I dropped it down the stairs earlier this morning, so I think it’s super durable. It’s prolly got a really thick metal casing beneath that sexy exterior. Or it’s made of Nintendium,” Maxxie(T) commented.

“Okay, so we are not sure how this remote works, but would it not have a battery that would—” Zoe(S) began before I jumped straight to the answer he was looking for.

“Right, I almost forgot to mention that. The VD should have *unlimited* power. So we don’t need to be concerned about getting stuck as each other or anything. We can, supposedly, swap back and forth an infinite number of times. Which is great to know, but before we go playing musical bodies or whatever, we should probably figure out what we will do with this remote going forward.”

“Maybe we should just give it to the police, and the government can make sure the technology doesn’t fall into the wrong hands.” Terra(M) pondered as she played with the hem of her dress.

“What, and give it up forever to a legion of suits who wear gloves to hide the evil that stains their hands? I don’t think so, *Missy*.” Maxxie(T) responded to her sister.

"Hey, your family has a lot of connections, so couldn't they take responsibility for this VD and figure out who this Verde woman is?" Shiaka(J) asked Maxxie(T).

"Even if we had a last name for this Verde, it could all very well be a pseudonym. And based on what you brought up, the audio clip was not of her voice. With information *this* limited, it would be impossible to determine who she was." Zoe(S) said, stroking his smooth hair and tiny chin.

"How about we put that all off until Thanksgiving, maybe even Winter Break? For now, we have something that people could only *dream* of, and I say we make the most of it." Maxxie(T) said.

"What are you getting at, Maxxie?" I asked.

"Well, we all know that fifteen percent of our school doesn't show up during the two days before Thanksgiving break, right? How about we get a little dangerous during those few days? How about we see what it's like in a day as one another, and really get a level of friendship that's never been seen or heard before? I mean, *what could possibly go wrong?*" Maxxie(T) asked the four of us.

"I don't know. How about... *everything?*" Zoe(S) answered with a hefty dose of sass.

"I won't deny that there are a lot of things that could go wrong, Zoe, but I don't think the odds of something disastrous happening are very high," I replied, trying to not sound rude with my current voice.

"Yeah, I guess we *could* lose this diddler, but that doesn't mean that it *will* happen. We can just keep it somewhere outside of school and hide it behind a bunch of things. And don't worry your cute little head about impersonations, as I can be a stick in the mud if I need to. Plus, most people prolly won't notice. Not like any of us are social butterflies." Maxxie(T) lectured.

"Actually, do any of you have any tests or projects due this week? Because that could be a bit of a problem. I only have some homework due this week, but I've already finished it." Shiaka(J) said as she fiddled with the floppy collar of the red polo she wore.

We all looked at each other and shook our heads.

"Well then, I think that now the biggest question is who will be who tomorrow. Terra, could you be a dear and fetch us some papers and pens?" Maxxie(T) requested, assuming everybody was hunky-dory with this plan of impersonation.

"Wait, *why* exactly do you want to do this?" Zoe(S) asked.

"What, dontcha think it's cool being in somebody else's body? Wouldn't you want to see what it's really like to be another person, get to know them on a more *intimate* level? See the world from

a new point of view? Feel differences as subtle as the winter wind along your cheek to the regular shaking of new parts whenever you take a step? This could be *such* an eye-opening experiment where we examine the socio-environmental and physical distinctions that are held to each of oneself and... Um..." Maxxie(T) rambled, hoping her flowery language would entice Zoe(S).

"...You *do* have a point, Maxxie. This is a unique opportunity, and I do admit that I am curious to see the differences each of our bodies possess. There is a lot that we could learn by reflecting on this experience, and we could learn a lot, not only of ourselves. ...I will have to research this further. ...*How* did I not immediately jump to this conclusion?" Zoe(S) murmured as he began pacing about the basement.

Following Zoe's agreement to the plan, I went to Shiaka(J), who still looked a bit unnerved by her new body.

"Hey, Shiaka, would you be comfortable with this? I mean, I know that this is a very foreign situation for you, but we're here for you if something goes wrong." I explained in an effort to comfort her.

"This is a *really* weird feeling, Jad. I can feel my heart, your heart, beating really quickly, and even that is different. But, I... I really *should* try new things. And you're right. If we do... swap bodies and go to school, I will have you, Zoe, and Maxxie if things go wrong." Shiaka(J) said, speaking in the softest voice she could manage with my original body's vocal cords.

"Bam! That's three down? What about you, *tall guy*? Any objections to a two-part school day body swap?" Maxxie(T) asked, glaring up at me.

"Of course, Maxxie. Just so long as we're careful... Which I know is sometimes hard for you," I answered with a slight groan.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"You dropped the VD after having it for less than 24 hours..."

"...*Duly noted*," Maxxie(T) growled.

As we reached a mutual agreement, Terra returned to the basement with a stack of notebook paper and five pens—

Verde: *You can just skim the rest of the day from this point. We have already spent quite some time going through the course of fifteen minutes... if that. Plus, the rest of the scene gets rather chaotic from here on out if I recall.*

Oh, um, okay. In that case, after two hours of bickering and off-handed conversations, we came to a conclusion as to how we would handle going to school tomorrow and the day after.

Firstly, we would prepare a series of notes about how to behave in each of our classes. We listed teacher names, general course information, and topics that we presumed would come up during the two days. The notes would also detail whatever assignment was due, our locker combination, and any kind of behavior-based tips that we could use. That would be our assignment for the rest of Sunday, while on both Monday and Tuesday we would each write a reflection about our day in each other's body.

Then on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, we would hold a meeting wherein our reflections would be used as the basis for a discussion that Zoe pegged as lasting all day. This discussion would be recorded with the recording equipment that Maxxie bought three years ago via a fire sale. This was back when she was trying to start a podcast with the five of us, but gave up after she could not come up with a good name, as JMZST is an awful acronym.

Maxxie, expectedly, was not a fan of the formalities she would need to abide by. But I think she was more upset that she'd need to figure out how to make a podcast... Which she wouldn't even need to do. Shiaka would probably be the one to set all of this up. Anything tech-related is kind of her specialty.

As for determining who would be who on a given day, we settled on the following order after about half an hour of disorganized debating.

On Monday I will be in Shiaka's body, Maxxie will be in my body, Zoe will be in Maxxie's, and Shiaka will be in Zoe's body. While Terra would sit the events out, as she did have a test that she didn't want us, people who are seven grades above her, to take it for her. So, that's Jad(S), Maxxie(J), Zoe(M), Shiaka(Z) for Monday. While Tuesday would have me be in Maxxie's body once more, Maxxie would be in Zoe's body, Zoe would be in my body, while Shiaka is in Terra's body, and vice versa. So, that is Jad(M), Maxxie(Z), Zoe(J), Shiaka(T), and Terra(S).

This was all relatively easy to figure out... except for the Terra stuff.

Verde: *Would you like to recount things verbatim?*

That's... actually a good idea. *Why didn't I think of that?*

After nailing down the first day, we moved on to discussing how our bodies would be arranged during the second day. But before any of us could call dibs, we had to accommodate Terra.

"So, Terra, you feel cozy enough in that bod 'o mine to spend a full-ass school day presenting as the one, *the only*, Maxxie Flare?" Maxxie(T) said, kicking off the topic.

“Well... I love you Maxxie, but we are very different people,” Terra(M) began. “You are so energetic and bright, while I... I don’t think I could handle the pressure of being you. M-Maybe eventually, but this is all so—”

“—I’ll swap with her,” Shiaka(J) said, slamming her male palms against her jeans.

“...Well, *that* was unexpected,” Zoe(S) added.

“Shiaka, I’m glad that you are so willing, but are you sure about this? Do you want to make it a multi-person swap or—” I asked before being cut off.

“No, I... I would like to go to school as Terra. I know that elementary schools aren’t... the most comfortable place for me, but I know that if I do this, I will be helping Terra live out a fantasy of hers. She will get to live as a girl— N-Not that she *isn’t* a girl, but—”

“I get what you mean, Shiaka... but are you sure about that?” Terra(M) asked, holding Shiaka(J)’s hand. “I don’t know the details, but I know that you aren’t the most... flexible person when it comes to things like that.”

“It... it’s strange being someone else. Even just being in Jad’s body, I feel a bit... scared. However, I will never get anywhere if I let my fears define me, and... I know things are safe at your school. I know that you all will come pick me up. What happened all those years ago was an anomaly and, so long as I can call upon you all, so long as you tell me everything you can, Terra, then I will be fine.”

“Shiaka... *thank you*,” Maxxie(T) said as she hugged Shiaka(J).

Once this agreement was made, we began hashing out the rest of the details for day two. With our short-term plans solidified, we enjoyed a lunch that Babs prepared for us— because she’s lovely like that— and played *Smash Bros.* with swapping bodies every few rounds. To say it was disorientating was an understatement, hopping between different controllers, characters, and sets of hands while everyone else did the same. It made for a fun afternoon and lasted until around 17:30.

We planned to reconvene tomorrow before school, gathering in Maxxie’s car and swapping before we set out for what was sure to be a *very* memorable day. However, the question of who would hold onto the VD for the next few hours came up right as Zoe, Shiaka, and I were all preparing to leave.

“So, what’re we gonna do with Verde’s Doohickey?” Terra asked as she picked up the VD and looked at the four of us with confusion.

“Wait, is that what VD stands for?” Shiaka asked Maxxie and I.

"I actually... that very well may be it... regardless, that's a good question, who should hold onto it?" I pondered.

"Rock Paper Scissors, anyone?" Maxxie asked as she cracked her knuckles.

"Fair enough, but I trust only one of you will participate?" Zoe asked as he looked towards Terra and Maxxie.

"Yeah, best two out of three, Jad versus me, you two versus each other, and then winners against each other," Maxxie answered Zoe, providing the necessary details.

After getting situated, Maxxie more or less threw our match. Half folding her hand and turning it into paper when I began with scissors, and switching to rock when I followed up with paper. I gave her a concerned look, but she just gave me a wink before Shiaka turned to me, apparently having beaten Zoe. I managed to beat her, thanks only to my own luck. Accordingly, Maxxie plopped the VD into my backpack.

After saying my goodbyes and putting my backpack on, I left the basement, only to immediately be pulled aside by Babs.

"Jad, can I talk to you for a minute?" Babs said as I walked through the living room..

"Sure," I answered as I walked over to her.

"I hate to pry, but I like to cover my bases. Is anything going on with Maxxie and Terra?"

"They, we all are, planning *something*, but no worries. We've already worked out what we needed to, and everything should be fine."

"So, you're planning *something*? What kind of *something*?" Babs echoed back at me, unsatisfied with my answer.

"You... everything will be clear by the end of the month, or at least the year, don't worry." I answered with a vague truth.

"Alright then... have a nice night, Jad."

I could tell that Babs was suspicious of something, but she knew that we were all 'good kids' so she dropped the matter pretty quickly. With her approval, I said goodbye and walked out the door.

Verde: And... Scene!

Oh, so you don't want me to describe how much I *loved* the weather outside?

Verde: *No, I'd— Ah, yes, a hint of sarcasm, a true sign of your comfort with somebody.*

It was more of a self-demeaning jab to myself because I'm starting to get a bit tired of hearing myself talk so much.

Verde: *Yes, I can see how that would be a problem... Changing the subject, would you have cared more for Zoe's body if it was cleanly shaven, like a swimmer's body?*

Yeah, I guess so. I mean, being tall was novel at least, and I did see some appeal in the strength his body possessed. The glasses were pretty weird for me to wear too, though I guess you just get used to them after a while.

Verde: *Would you like it more than the body of a female Zoe? A 'Zoey' if I may be uncreative.*

I... I found being in a female body to be far more interesting than being in a male body. If that's what you're getting at. It's different in so many subtle ways, and if I had to decide on whether I would spend the day in a male body or the female equivalent, I'd choose female. ...Simply because it's so new to me.

Verde: *Interesting. Now then, unless you would like to discuss things further, let's resume the recounting!*

Session 08: A School-Style Swap



So, after a pleasant walk through the bright remnants of autumn as winter was quickly closing in, I finally returned to my home, greeted my mother as she was preparing dinner, and made my way back to my bedroom. There I changed into something less... discomforting than what Maxxie dressed my body in, and then plopped my butt into my bungee chair, before loading up a Google Doc to get started on our self-appointed homework. ...Or at least that was the plan until my mother knocked on my door.

She had her blonde hair tied in a bun, was dressed comfortably in a dark green sweater and beige pants, and had a concerned look on her face.

"Hey, I just wanted to make sure everything is alright with you."

"Oh, everything's fine," I promptly replied, "I was in the midst of working on something with Maxxie, which is why I was a bit weird last night and this morning... I only wore those clothes per Maxxie's request. I could give you the details, but it's a *long* story."

"...Okay then, I just want to make sure nothing's wrong with my little sweetie." She said as she wrapped me in her arms, giving me a small hug.

With her satisfied, I began working on the document for, well, specifically for Maxxie, as she was going to be in my body in a few hours. Even though we were both seniors and knew the school incredibly well, I still made it a point to emphasize and over-explain certain details. Because I knew Maxxie was the sort who would space out when it came to important details like room numbers and teacher names. I was done with everything before dinner, and after dinner, I pretty much went about what I would be doing on a Sunday night. Which was far more mundane than the body swapping social experiment I was getting ready for mere minutes beforehand.

I browsed through NeoGaf, checked my RSS feeds, and re-listened to an episode of *The Comedy Button* from a year ago, took a shower, and spent about two hours playing *Trails in the Sky*. By the time I was done, it was 23:00, and I figured that I may as well get my body rested for tomorrow. Truthfully, what I did that evening was a complete waste of the VD. However, the only person I could use it with was my mother and... it was weird enough being in the bodies of my friends.

After 20 restless minutes of staring up at the ceiling, trying not to worry about tomorrow, I entered a dreamless sleep, and found myself waking up early, with my clock reading 6:30.

I decided to not waste this opportunity to get everything ready, and began my morning routine. Going to the bathroom, brushing my teeth, combing my hair, grabbing an apple and some toast from the kitchen, double-checking my backpack, and finally getting dressed in my uniform.

Yes, my high school has uniforms, but it didn't do the sort of thing where you need to wear the *exact same thing* every single day for four years. There were five base uniforms for both winter and summer months, and you could customize them however you please, barring a few exceptions like shortening a skirt.

I personally kept it pretty simple throughout the years and put on a light blue dress shirt, beige dress pants, and a navy blazer. It's pretty much the default male outfit but with a different color scheme. Actually, the default male outfit used to have a tie included, but people stopped wearing those, and now they only hand them out to students who specifically order one.

Aside from Zoe, I can only think of *four* people who I have seen wear them regularly. The rest just stopped wearing them after the first few days, because what's the point? I guess ties do offer some visual appeal and perhaps individuality in the dark side of the business world. Where you are viewed as a money absorbing leech by management and not a resourceful individual who is an asset in and of themselves. But that's all I can think of.

Rant aside, I left for Maxxie's place at 6:52, walking through the scattered leaves and taking in the light frost that was coating the grass and sidewalk.

I reached Maxxie's house by seven, where I promptly rang the bell, hoping that my friend was as enthusiastic as I was and would be ready a little early. After thirty silent seconds, the door

opened for me, revealing a tired and disheveled looking Babs. Her eyes were blank, her normally neat hair was an absolute mess, and her lavender nightgown had a broken shoulder strap, partially revealing one of her fairly large breasts. After taking a good look at me and realizing who I was, she immediately woke up from her half-asleep daze, pushed some hair out of her face, and greeted me.

“Oh, good morning Jad— I’m sorry about this, it was just going to be a relaxed night with drinks and a film, but— things got a little loose and...” Babs said, sounding uncharacteristically unnerved.

“No, no, it’s fine, Maxxie just wanted to meet up with me early today— she isn’t awake yet, is she?” I asked, already knowing the answer.

“That girl never tells me these things... Would you mind waking her and Tyler up?”

“Sure thing,” I said as I kicked off my shoes and made my way up to Maxxie’s room.

Maxxie always looked to be at peace when she slept, and today was no exception, her blankets disheveled, one arm hanging halfway off the bed, and her face half-covered by her pillow. It was not graceful by any means, but it exemplified her charm and, well, I thought it was pretty cute, for whatever that’s worth. Part of me wanted to let her rest, but we had a schedule to keep, so I promptly shook her, which did nothing. In retaliation, I crawled into her bed with her and give her a hug. A move that caused her to stir in her sheets for a moment, before finally opening her eyes and greeting me with a smile.

“Oh, hey Jad. You just woke me up from one of my more effed up dreams.” Maxxie said as she began hugging me back.

“*Oh boy*, what was it this time?” I said, anticipating something dirty.

“Alright. So, it was one of my many *sex dreams*. You were down on your knees licking my kitten, I had a bit of an *overload* when it came to my juices, and they splattered all over your face. We laughed, but then you went face deep into my lady guts, shoving your head up where the sun don’t shine, when normally only a few fingers can fit up there. Your body, neck down, then began wiggling and contracting itself, collapsing into one big fat limb that shifted and changed into an *7XL-sized cock*. The skin changed to match my color, and for some reason, your curly brown hair started poking out right above my new super sized schlong. Then I did a Kululu laugh, and you woke me up.”

After explaining her cock absorption dream, Maxxie rose out of bed, rejuvenated by her latest erotic fantasy.

“...You stayed up until 1 AM looking for weird smut, didn’t you?”

“Yeah. I found the Tumblr of some Brazilian girl by the name of Nono, or Regulos. Love her ideas, but her actual art’s pretty whatevs.”

There were so many questions I could offer, but so little time...

“Look, we need to be out of here in twenty minutes, try to get ready ASAP. I’m going to wake Terra up.”

Terra was, by comparison, far easier to wake up, as a single tap on her shoulder caused her to roll over and turn her head to face me. I quickly told her that Babs slept in, and left her to prepare for another day of elementary school.

With the Flare children woken up, I returned downstairs and ran into Babs, who was still in her nightgown, and clearly flustered. For a moment, I wondered if she was truly Babs, or if somebody had stolen the VD from me last night to specifically swap her with someone else. ...But I was pretty sure nobody took the VD from me overnight.

“Damn, it’s already 7:10... Jad, can you heat up some milk? I just need a minute to take care of something.” Babs said before scampering away, clearly assuming that I would say yes.

Verde: *Heat up some milk?*

Yeah, English is *technically* Babs’ second language, not that you’d know that based on her complete lack of an accent, but there are some odd phrases she picked up here and there over the years.

Oh, wait, you mean the *milk* part. Yeah, long story short, instead of coffee or anything normal like that, Babs makes Maxxie a cup of ‘Cocoa Honey Milk Tea’ or ‘CHarM Tea’ to wake her up. It’s fairly self-explanatory. Milk tea mixed with a spoon of honey, and some sprinkles of milk chocolate that quickly melts and gives the drink a certain punch. She probably would have prepared me a cup yesterday, when I was in Maxxie’s body, but seeing as how I got up nice and early-ish, I figured she thought I was good to go.

Explanation aside, I started up the milk, Babs took it from there, and I waited at the front door for Maxxie to come down the stairs, which she did about 20 minutes after I woke her up. Being the creative type, Maxxie took full advantage of the school’s customizable uniforms and crafted herself a catalog of outfits she shifted between regularly.

Today, she opted for a dress shirt she had dyed a soft pink and a violet blazer that was customized with larger pockets. She was also wearing a navy skirt, thigh-high leggings, and naturally a pair of modesty shorts. You know, in case any pervert decided to relish in a fetish that Maxxie, *weirdly enough*, did not understand.

“Sorry ‘bout that, Jad. But we put aside some extra time just in case, right?” Maxxie asked, still sounding a bit sleepy.

“Yes, but not much. We still need to pick up Zoe and Shiaka, you know,” I reminded her.

“Kay, just let me get my Charm Tea and I’ll get to it.”

“Right here, sunshine,” Babs said from behind Maxxie, planting a thermos in her hands.

“Thanks bunches, Babs!” Maxxie shouted right before she began taking a long swig of her drink, letting out a satisfied ‘ah.’

Energized, Maxxie promptly got ready, grabbed her car from the garage, and we headed to pick up our friends. We all got together, exchanged our information sheets while in the car, and eventually reached Oransen High School by 7:45.

“Alright, so today it’s Jad and Shiaka, Jad’s body and me, and then my body and Zoe, so *you* should take care of this li’l switcheroo, Z-meister!” Maxxie explained quickly, fueled by the power of her Charm Tea.

“I will... *if* you never call me that again,” Zoe told Maxxie.

“Deal. Just try not to get carried away with the *powers* you’ll receive. They have crushed sexier men than even yourself, you sexy-fficient specimen, you.” Maxxie quipped as she handed Zoe the VD.

“*Sexy-fficient?*” Shiaka repeated in confusion.

“A combination of sexy and efficient, where one’s sex appeal is beneficial to his general efficiency.” I recited, recalling Maxxie’s definition.

A second after I listed that definition, I felt a jolt through my body once again, and then found my senses fade away as my mind was being relocated into the person right next to me.

I reflexively shook my head as I regained consciousness, sending a few stray blonde hairs into my face. I lifted my right hand to push them away and was surprised not only by how soft Shiaka’s hair was, but how delicate her tiny hands felt. I brought the two of them together, taking a moment to relish in their shared softness, grinning as I did so.

I then looked downwards and examined my current body along with the uniform I was wearing. As much as I hate to say it, my attention was drawn to the chest. While I was *somewhat* used to having breasts after spending almost a full day in Maxxie’s body, it was still surprising to

suddenly gain them. And it did not help that Shiaka was a bit... bigger than Maxxie, despite being a smaller person overall.

As for the uniform, Shiaka pretty much stuck with a mostly black uniform with white stitchings and a yellow ribbon around the collar, along with some black stockings. It honestly looked a lot like the uniform from *Persona 4*. And that's probably because I know who designed these uniforms, and she is a *massive* anime dork. Regardless, I always thought it looked nice, and have to say I was pleasantly surprised by how soft the fabric was as it touched my skin. Before I could delve deeper into observations, I was distracted by a satisfied chuckle from a *very* familiar voice.

"Why hello there my little friend, didja miss me?" Maxxie(J) said as she reached her hand down her newly acquired pants.

"Maxxie, is that really necessary?" Shiaka(Z) asked before taking in her new voice, grabbing her throat after speaking.

"Is *what* necessary, Zoe?" Zoe(M) replied to his former body, imitating Maxxie's tone almost *perfectly*.

"Right— w-we probably should start using our body's names," I said, trying to get used to the softer voice and higher tones I had access to.

"In that case, Zoe, put the VD in the glove box. *Maxxie*, the key should be on your keyring, so lock it up in case daytime school-based burgle boys bust open your buggy." Maxxie(J) instructed.

"Sure thing, J-Styles, but are you sure you're feeling alright? 'Snot that normal to see you so bubbly." Zoe(M) pointed out.

"Right, right. I got up a bit early, and I guess a bit of your Maxxie-isms have been wearing off on me more than they normally do." Maxxie(J) said, trying to match my tone.

"I locked up the VD, so are you guys— are you all ready for what will surely be a very... *memorable* Monday?" Shiaka(Z) asked, failing to capture her bodily persona as well as Maxxie(J) or Zoe(M).

"No, I think everything's fine. Do you want to meet up in the IRC or..." I answered, only to lead into another question, as that seemed like a very 'Shiaka' thing to do...

Verde: *Could you please define 'IRC'?*

Information Resource Center. It's basically a computer lab crossed with a library with a couple of rooms that are reserved for clubs and the occasional class where the kids need to type. Actually, the desktop computers aren't used that often since Oransen High implemented a laptop policy. Every student either needs to bring their own laptop, or they get stuck with a crappy little netbook provided by the school. The policy only went into effect for the class behind me, the class of 2016, so I'm 'exempt' from the policy.

Verde: *Do you bring a laptop with you?*

My mother convinced me into getting one last year, but I don't like using it. It is heavy, takes up a lot of space in your backpack, and is overall harder to use than a desktop. And in case you wanted to know, Zoe lacks a laptop, as he views them as unnecessary when there are desktop computers readily available. Shiaka has a really nice one she got a year ago, and uses it for pretty much *everything* when given the opportunity. As for Maxxie, she had a tablet she used for a while, but she can be a bit of a klutz, dropped it a bunch, and after a while, it broke.

...Where was I? Right, leaving the car.

We all went off in separate directions after walking through the front door, heading to our current body's designated locker, and grabbing what we needed.

This, naturally, led me to walk around school in Shiaka's original body. Now, I wouldn't say I was a very tall person normally, standing at 177 centimeters tall. But losing about twenty centimeters, and just *barely* passing five feet, it felt pretty weird. *Everybody* was taller than me. Everything was relatively bigger than I was used to. Plus, the act of carrying around the books I needed, along with the fairly heavy laptop I did not even use, made me realize just how... *dainty* I would be for the next few hours. I was used to carrying around a seven kilogram backpack day in and day out, but Shiaka had pretty much no upper body strength.

There was also the weight I was regularly reminded of on my chest. It would sway slightly or bounce as I made sudden movements, or become agitated when I briefly forgot I was sporting breasts and pushed something against my chest. I know, I know, *why is this new to me*, as I spent a day in Maxxie's body? Well, because I was carrying more stuff and the breasts were... bigger than Maxxie's. Both proportionally and in terms of sheer volume.

But if I am going to compare Maxxie and Shiaka's body, I will have to say that Shiaka was overall a lot softer. Her entire body had a silky texture to it, and her hair— feeling it brush along my face and neck, titillating my skin, it was enough to bring a smirk to my face. It filled me with a warm, cozy, comfortable, reassuring feeling with every step I took, and every tilt of my head.

Verde: *So breasts suck, but the hair is where it's at?*

Breasts exist so that women may feed their children, but because male animals normally judge a female's attractiveness based on how cool their butt is. The problem is that humans walk upright, so breasts evolved to resemble butts... Maxxie told me this in, like, eighth grade, so sorry if I got something wrong.

Verde: *No, that is a decent explanation, especially given the years since you heard it... Why do humans have hair though?*

Um... I don't know, but if I had to guess... hair was a carryover from the predecessor that would give way to the Genus of Homo, containing Homo Sapiens, Homo Erectus. A term that *always* brings forth a string of giggles in freshman Biology. But the name just means that they walked upright, and... a third one I cannot remember.

Verde: *Homo Habilis.*

Thank you. Anyway, they likely had a lot of hair, but as humans evolved and split off into different regions, started wearing clothes and such, hair probably became less valuable, and as such began lessening. However, body hair is very genetically influenced, and—

Verde: *You're getting tangled in the weeds of detail, Jad. What 'function' does hair serve?*

Oh, sorry about that. It likely acted as providing warmth, but then that changed and now its appeal is mostly visual.

Verde: *...And sensory as you pointed out.*

Right, right... Say Verde, I... no nevermind..

Verde: *Pardon?*

...I know that this is not a very polite question, but I need to ask, how old are you?

Verde: *I have existed for roughly three years now. Not that my age should matter.*

I... No, how are you *only* three years old?

Verde: *It is a technicality that I shall answer this question in due time. Ask once we have completed this story, and you will learn the origin of the Dusk.*

You gave me that offer about... how long have we been going?

Verde: *Roughly three hours, so I guess it would be ninety minutes ago. Regardless, I was simply reiterating that you will learn everything in due time. For now, please carry on to your first period.*

Session 09: School Daze



First period began shortly after I arrived at school, and thanks to Shiaka's notes, I was able to find her desk and assume her identity and not look like a complete goof. The class was AP Calculus, a step above my math course, which was just regular Calculus, and today was thankfully pretty lax.

We were just going over a test the teacher graded over the weekend. I took a sigh of relief as I realized that Shiaka's prediction for this class was, indeed, correct. But that does not mean that I was all that *comfortable* during class. If you could not tell, I am not a very charismatic person, and needing to pose as somebody else, while surrounded by people I didn't know, was discomforting, awkward, and intimidating to me.

I felt like I was doing something wrong, that I was going to be 'found out,' and that I was missing something obvious, even as I had all the answers I needed right in front of me. Whereas I knew Maxxie's home life pretty well, I knew very little about Shiaka's school life or daily routine, so the best I could do was copy her more reserved and introverted mannerisms. So I stayed quiet while looking through Shiaka's test. A test she got a 94% on, surprise, surprise.

Wanting to focus on something, I decided to follow the teacher as he ran through the test, casually explaining concepts that I was not familiar with. I did my best to write notes on what Shiaka got wrong so she could review later. As I wrote, I tried to write something resembling

Shiaka's graceful penmanship, but even with her hands, my writing was still pretty sloppy. While in this focused state, I was interrupted by a low pitched female voice that perked up from behind me, followed by a finger that tapped me on the shoulder.

"Shiaka, may I see your work on question 19?"

I immediately shot my head behind me and locked eyes with Vivi Gaimz. I would not say that she was a *friend* of mine, but we were acquaintances who worked amicably on a few projects in the past and got along well in general. She was a very reserved and responsible young woman, but also a very curt one. She spoke plainly and directly, always getting to the point with any conversation and trying to end it as quickly as possible.

She was not *rude* by any stretch of the imagination, but she put off an air that drove people away from her. This left her as something of a social outcast beyond her small group of mutual friends. Friends who seemed like they would not get along, but were supposedly quite close. Kind of like me and my friends, I guess.

As for her appearance, she had a head of long curly red hair, dull green eyes with bags beneath them, a pale complexion, and was covered in freckles, head to toe. Her hair was not very well brushed from the morning, *it almost never was*, and I could see a pimple or two on her face. Her uniform consisted of a dark violet shirt, navy vest, and black pants. Something plain, androgynous, and unremarkable. She was never the type to dress up, which I think was a shame. I had a gut feeling that she could be pretty cute if she tried a little harder, not unlike Maxxie.

"Shiaka?" Vivi said back to me after I spent five full seconds staring at her.

"Hmm? Oh, yes, here— you can take a look at it," I meekly replied as I handed her Shiaka's test.

Vivi spent the next minute looking over the problem in silence, glancing at her own test and writing in her notebook with a purple pen, rapidly scribbling notes.

"Thanks, Shiaka. Here's your test back," Vivi said as she placed the assessment back on my desk.

"Oh, no problem Vivi. Anytime," I muttered under my breath.

Following that interaction, I was instilled with a sense of slight confidence that, perhaps, I truly was overthinking this. The belief that the life of a student was not filled with as much nuance as I thought it could have been.

After chiding myself for getting so worked up over nothing, I continued to diligently take notes, trying my best to understand what was happening and to mimic Shiaka's handwriting. I did this even though, realistically, nobody would question why 'my' handwriting was suddenly worse today. Every oddity in my behavior would likely not be perceived by others due to change blindness, especially with regards to the girl who never speaks during class due to... a lot of reasons, really.

Verde: *Are you going to bring some of those up now, or...*

There is a better time to bring them up later on in the day. For now, I'll move onto second period, which is a study hall for myself, Shiaka(J), and Maxxie(Z). ...Except on Wednesdays and Fridays, because of AP Physics.

Verde: *What exactly are your schedules? ...I should have asked you to explain this earlier.*

Oh, it's no problem... I think it will be easier to explain if I could get some paper and a pen-

Verde: **Snap**

...And you suddenly poofed that into my hands.

Verde: *We're in a pocket dimension of my control. I mean, I am the one who made the walls this lovely shade of lavender with a head nod.*

Okay... so all of our schedules go something like this:

Oransen High Student Schedules - Fall 2014 Semester

Period	Jad Novus	Maxxisaurus Flare	Zoe Xing	Shiaka Kurokawa
1.	Psychology	Psychology	AP Physics	AP Calculus
2.	Study Hall	Ceramics	AP Physics (W&F)	Study Hall
3.	Creative Writing	Creative Writing	AP European History	Strength and Conditioning
4.	Strength and Conditioning	Studio Art	Strength and Conditioning	Psychology
5.	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
6.	Consumer Education	Consumer Education	AP Calculus	College Prep English
7.	Calculus	Study Hall	Consumer Education	Consumer Education
8.	College Financial Accounting	Adventure Education	Honor's College Prep English	College Financial Accounting
9.	Study Hall	Study Hall	AP Microeconomics	Study Hall

Verde: *That is a lot of study halls... Mind if I ask why your Senior years are so lax?*

We only need a certain amount of credits for graduation, and we already took most of the classes we wanted to. We tried to get into more classes, but if less than fifteen students wanted to get into a class, they were not green-lit. Plus, Maxxie wanted us to start working on a big project of some sort, and... we just didn't ... she is not a very organized young woman.

Verde: *And what exactly is this project?*

She wanted all four of us to make a video game together, even though half of us know little to nothing about game design. Nothing ever came of it. Not even a complete game design document.

Anyhow, after a disorganized break between classes where I was reminded of how unsettling it is to be surrounded by people who were a full head taller than you, I made my way to the IRC. I quickly reached into Shiaka's backpack to pull out her student ID, swiped in at the front desk,

and once again was surprised by just how small I was at the moment. I went there to the IRC on a daily basis, so seeing everything be so proportionally bigger than me... it brought me back to freshman year and gave me a slight sense of nostalgia.

The well-laid-out mesh of bookshelves, wooden desks and chairs, and scattered computers, all part of a U-shaped room that overlooked a small courtyard area that housed a massive tree from back when this school was built in 1985.

As I was taking in the familiar sights, I was called over to a corner by a familiar voice, the one I had for 18 years, coming from my usual table. There I found Maxxie(J) and Shiaka(Z) already immersed in a conversation.

“—Well, you can try to find some time in the bathroom— when is your next study hall again?” Maxxie(J) whispered.

“M-Maxxie, look, I really do not want the first thing I do while in one of my friend’s bodies to be so... lewd.” Shiaka(Z) stammered, her tone and frazzled gestures looking out-of-place given her tall male form.

“You’re lucky nobody’s around this table, you know?” I said, jumping in on this conversation before plopping my butt and backpack down.

“Good morning *Shiaka*, how was your first period? Oh, wait, you made sure to keep your legs closed, right? I’m sorry, I forgot to mention that in my notes.” Shiaka(Z) said, her voice and tone still shaky.

“I always cross or keep my legs pretty close together,” I said I gestured to show my legs crossing without creasing the skirt.

“Yeah, he learned to act like a lady when he was eleven— Or did I not tell you that story?” Maxxie(J) added... referring to the crossdressing story I brought up a while ago.

“Oh, yes, you told me. ...I’m still surprised you didn’t get in trouble with the school.” Shiaka(Z) replied.

“Pfft, you kidding?” Maxxie(J) began. “They were talking about a *crossdressing day* for a while. It was about to enter the planning stages, but then some parents caught wind of it, and got super salty about the idea of their *dear little Nathaniel* wearing a skirt! It kinda sucks, but in just a couple dozen more years those old farts will be *powerless* and out of the public eye. Then *we’ll* get to run this world and become the crotchety old folks yelling at those damn dirty hip and happening pansexual genderqueer tweenagers! ...So did that *schlong* bother you while sitting, Shi-Shi?”

“Look, this is really not the place for conversations about genitalia. Plus, we should *probably* use our body’s respective names and behaviors, if you catch my drift, *Jad and Zoe*.”

“Oh, in that case... Zoe, I just want to make sure you were... okay during this period, and didn’t have any... lower body troubles.”

I was impressed with the way Maxxie(J) worded that question, as it was a pretty close approximation to how *I* would phrase the same question.

“I... I suppose that I did encounter some issues with controlling it. The boxers, size, and general position of it all when it was fully erect proved to be a tad problematic.” Shiaka(Z) explained, imitating Zoe pretty well.

“Nice, full points except for the tad comment, ‘cos it’s a ‘tad’ redundant.” Maxxie(J) said with a snarky smirk. “Personally, I encountered some... problems when it came to hiding it, but seeing as how the desk hides your lap pretty well, nobody noticed. ‘Maxxie’ seemed to notice it and gave me a wink in response, but that was about it. The class was pretty boring otherwise, as it was a simple review of concepts we already went through. I couldn’t help but notice that ‘Maxxie’ was really focused on the material, frantically writing things down. She should have probably asked a question, but she was never the sort to interrupt class, *not like you, Zoe*.”

“My AP Calculus wasn’t that interesting either,” I explained. “We just went over a test, which *I* did pretty well on. I also handed my test over to Vivi Gaimz when she asked, and that was the only time I really did much but sit, listen, and make some notes.”

“That is certainly more involved than my AP Physics course was,” Shiaka(Z) began. “For whatever reason the AP students feel as if they can simply skip classes for an early holiday, and as such my class was far more vacant than usual. Even my professor felt this way, as they put a substitute in charge of this class for the next two days. A substitute with absolutely no lesson plan. All I had to preoccupy myself with during this period was a novel, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Cat’s Cradle*, in my backpack, as my homework had already been completed. I was worried that my peers would try to speak to me, but they were all content with their AP class being a study hall for the next two days.”

“Eh, Zoe would be sure to mention the study hall thing sooner, but you’re doing a good job, Shi-Shi.” Maxxie(J) playfully noted.

“Not to be rude Zoe, but if I weren’t friends with you, I wouldn’t approach you when you have your head buried in a book. You can be pretty... intimidating.” I told Shiaka(Z).

“True, true, you don’t look that friendly when you are giving someone that gaze of yours. I think it may just be your default expression.” Maxxie(J) commented.

"I like to think it has to do with my more mature features. Even then, teenagers are notoriously bad at identifying facial expressions, often assuming that people are angrier than they actually are." Shiaka(Z) stated, adjusting her glasses after speaking.

"But seriously, guys, how are you liking your temp bodies?" Maxxie(J) asked, taking over the conversation.

"I feel tiny. I mean, not just regarding height, my volume in general is so much... less than I'm used to, and I feel a lot daintier and weaker than I'm used to. No offense, Zoe." I bluntly laid out, feeling a bit bad at my lack of sugar coating.

"After being in your body for a few hours, I can certainly understand your perspective. But it's *nothing* compared to jumping into Zoe's body. I keep feeling that I will bump my head on something, slam doors, or accidentally throw things in the air. I can appreciate this in some way, like the strength, the height— I feel like a genuine giant in Zoe's body. I no longer need to look up at people, I need to bend my head down to them, and I can't begin to tell you how different that is! That said, I do dislike the bodily hair that Zoe has, and the voice. His deep masculine tones sound even deeper in my head, and it's... unsettling to hear myself speak."

"Yeah, that's one thing I don't like about this side of the fence, *the voice*," Maxxie(J) said. "It just doesn't sound right to me. As a *former male*... *Shiaka*, what's your angle on your squeaky new voice box?"

"I think I always preferred female voices over male to be honest," I said, being honest about being honest. "There's a lot of baggage you're free to dive into to figure out why. But the long and short of it is that I actually do like using this voice. I wouldn't really want to have it *forever*, I'd prefer something less... extreme, closer to your voice, Maxxie. ...Wait, what do you mean by 'former male'?"

"I was being a silly Billy. And as for how I feel about this bod, I'm having a good time. Sure, impersonating boils my broth a bit, but I have an adult's patience and can stand still for forty minutes at a time— just not for *days on end*... Actually, do you wanna go somewhere special for Winter Break and bust the VD out? We can be entirely new people and shaz!"

"We have briefly discussed this before," Shiaka(Z) reminded us. "While we will almost certainly make use of this VD over Winter Break, we should focus on the present. We will have plenty of time to find a location if that is what you desire, so please, do try to stay focused on one thing at a time."

"Fine! ...But how about we..." Maxxie(J) began, sending us into a deluge of pretty pointless conversations about what we would do with the VD.

It was a pretty one-sided conversation involving our parents, some mutual acquaintances, and even the world at large. It really didn't take long for Maxxie(J) to fall down a thought hole where she would use the VD to effectively switch bodies with everybody around the world in order to free the world of sexism and racism. You know, the normal stuff.

Verde: *You said that so dryly that I could not tell if you were being sarcastic or not.*

My friends and I are basically social outcasts, and there are only... seven other students in this school who I really know. So I only have a slight grasp as to what is 'normal'.

Verde: *I actually never put two and two together, but, yes, you don't have many friends, mister Haganai.*

Hehehehehe. Goodness, I really am easy to please when it comes to anime references. But, yes, it is true and... You look like you want this conversation to go a very specific way.

Verde: *I do. I would like to hear the story of how you became friends with your crew.*

Okay then. Maxxie was an outcast— the new girl at school, transferred from a private elementary school for roughhousing, and was looking for a clique she could be part of. I, um, I had a few friends, I guess you could call them, but they were mostly my friends because they were in my class, and none of them were in my second grade class. However, Maxxie was in my second grade class, she seemed fun when she did her class introduction, and I decided I should try to play with her. From there, we just kept growing, our friendship blossoming into... where it is today. We didn't really have other friends at the time, and were perfectly content with just each other. At least for the following three years.

Verde: *Can you explain to me why somebody as charismatic as Maxxie did not amass a load of friends in grade school?*

She got into fights with some mean kids and built up a bad reputation. Come third grade, we were separated, sent to different classes, and that really annoyed Maxxie, while it just left me kinda sad. Maxxie threw this massive fit where she demanded that the school put us back together, breaking things and punching people. Needless to say, she suspended pretty quickly. But instead of staying home, she started protesting outside of the school, demanding for us to be in the same class. After that display, the school took the path of least resistance and put the two of us in the same class. It was easier than dealing with her horse poop.

As for Zoe, he was the new kid who arrived during the fifth grade, a week after the year started. As such, he was something of an outcast, which I think he *wanted*. He was always very quiet, kept to himself, and took notes, which was really rare to see in fifth grade. One day during recess he decided to read in this bench area in the school playground. A really nice spot, surrounded by these tall bushes and short trees, casting this area in a lot of shade during the

warmer months. Anyway, Maxxie felt kind of sorry for him, and tried to become friends with him. He was very reluctant, but after a week of pestering, he finally started hanging out with us. Continued engagement led to a bond and, bam, he became part of our group.

Then there is Shiaka, who was the 'January Girl' of our Freshman year. After learning about her, Maxxie invited her to eat lunch with herself, Zoe, and I. This was awkward for the first few days, as Shiaka was so quiet we could barely hear her over all the ambient clattering. As such, we eventually decided to crash a vacant classroom and eat lunch there. In this safer, quieter, environment, Shiaka opened up over the course of a few weeks and with that, another friend gained, amounting to a total of three. Yipee.

Verde: *So, you only ever made friends with the new kids?*

I never really thought about that, but I guess I did. Well, new kids are in an ample position to be swept into social groups, and what better group for social outcasts than a group of social outcasts?

Session 10: Starred Social Links



Verde: *What are your thoughts on locker rooms?*

...I get the context for the question— as I am about to begin regaling you with my time in P.E. while in Shiaka’s body— but that’s still a weird question.

Verde: *How so?*

Well, I figure that the answer would be pretty uniform for most people. They are public changing rooms. Unless you are a massive perv who is also attracted to the same sex, or a perv who snuck into the opposite sex’s locker room, then there is no reason to stay in there longer than you need to. They also reek of body odor and farts... which I guess would classify as a bodily odor in and of themselves.

Verde: *Or in other words, an asexual youth such as yourself has little reason to gain in the thrills of seeing glimpses of your female peers in their underwear. Or if there is a slip-up whilst changing for swimming, then perhaps you could see a bit more...*

Look, Shiaka gave me no notes on changing, and really, there is not much to tell. I simply went to the designated locker, entered the combination, took off my top and skirt, and put on a violet tracksuit with my “Oransen High” written on the back. Although, during the changing process, I

brushed a hand against my breasts. It was... intentional, as I was curious about what it would feel like. I was never going to do anything beyond that, and I barely even felt my hand past my bra.

Anyhow, Shiaka's teacher for Strength and Conditioning was pretty lax and gave us permission to do anything so long as we were moving around. Whether that be going to the cardio room or the weight room. We just had to do stuff for half an hour, then go change for the next period.

For whatever reason, I decided that I should try to see how much upper body strength Shiaka's original body had. Surprise, surprise, it had next to none. After two sets of arm curls, I abandoned the weight room and headed to do some cardio. I hopped on an elliptical in a room with three other people, none of whom I recognized or knew the names of, and worked out for about 25 minutes.

While on the elliptical, my mind decided to wander. To ruminate over the fact that I was presenting myself as someone else. I tried really placing myself in Shiaka's shoes, guessing what she would be thinking about at this very moment, and, well, I assumed that she would have thought of fear. The room was unsupervised for whatever reason, and the group of three people was conversing amongst themselves, occasionally glancing over at me or letting out a very audible string of laughter. I'd assume that Shiaka would be *intimidated* by this and would probably leave the classroom. Just to be safe.

'Why would she feel that way?' I can practically hear you asking, Verde. Well, I'll give you the full version. ...As in, all the important details. Not the three-hour-long rundown that Zoe, Maxxie, and I got during the summer of 2012 when Maxxie happened to see Shiaka's torso scars. Yeah, so, where to begin...

Shiaka has an older sister, Haruki Kurokawa. I like her, she's a really fun and creative person, but she unintentionally made Shiaka's childhood a certain flavor of hell. Haruki was pretty much a child prodigy, a brilliant little girl who wanted to go out to see the world, gain skills, and learn everything there was to learn. This was all before she started attending school, where she was quickly taken out of her public school and brought into a fancy private school. Around the time when Haruki was accepted, when she was six, Shiaka was born and was *generally* ignored by her parents in favor of their firstborn.

The Kurokawas were not spiteful of Shiaka. It's just that with Haruki eating up their weekends, and as both parents were working hard to support Haruki, it was easy for them to forget about Shiaka. She was an incredibly quiet baby, and as a toddler, she was perfectly content with staying in a room all day. She never caused any trouble, rarely asked for things, and was so passive that her parents would actually forget to feed her at times. When it came time for her to go to school, her parents had her attend a local public school and based on what she said, that place was a *total shithole*.

...For clarity's purpose, Shiaka did not live in Oransen or Illinois at the time. She lived in California.

At elementary school, Shiaka was typically ignored by her peers and teachers. She did the work promptly, retained information well, but was quiet, kept to herself, and, well... her school was also racist as shit. It was 90% White, and she was a biracial Asian and Hispanic girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. The White faculty and students viewed her as an 'other' and those who weren't White othered her because of her 'White' features. You know, despite the fact that she wasn't White. Like, at all.

For first and second grade, things were... *horrible* for her there. She was learning and did everything that was asked of her, but she was never treated with the respect that her White peers received. It was a *stable* kind of horrible... and it got *infinitely* worse shortly after the start of third grade. When Shiaka was placed in a class with two new kids named Izak and Olive.

On Friday, October 14th, 2005, when Shiaka was 8-years-old, these two... monsters targeted her and changed her life forever. School was let out for the day, everybody was rushing out of the building to enjoy the weekend. During this chaos, Izak and Olive dragged Shiaka into a supply room and bashed her head with a brick, knocking her unconscious. Once the lights were out, the two children dragged Shiaka to one of the school's *disgusting* restrooms. There, she was propped onto a toilet, stripped of her clothes, and... tortured.

They mangled her torso using a kitchen knife they heated with a lighter. They took a pair of pliers to her hair, tearing at her scalp until she was half-bald and blood was dripping onto her face. They bashed her body with a wrench, causing unsightly welts to form all across her body.

As the torture continued, Shiaka eventually passed out, unable to withstand the pain. After damaging her so severely, Izak and Olive assumed she was dead and left her as she was. Her battered naked body on the toilet seat and her tattered clothes scattered on the floor.

Hours later, Shiaka woke up to the darkness of the school washroom and escaped to the halls outside. Her body was bloodied, her legs were bruised, and she could barely stand. Still, she moved forward, crawling and pushing herself through the halls until she got to the entrance, until freedom was a few feet away. She looked longingly at the glass doors, at the sun setting on the horizon, but she lacked the strength to carry on and, with a final gasp, she passed out yet again.

She would have died there if not for a night jogger who happened to take a glance at the school, and saw Shiaka's body. The jogger *immediately* called the police, an ambulance, and the school board. Shiaka was minutes away from death, and the fact that she was able to live through something like that is... miraculous.

As part of a legal settlement, the school board compensated Shiaka's family with millions of dollars. Izak and Olive were expelled, forced out of the state, and were eventually murdered by

the police after they set fire to an elementary school in an attempt to 'cleanse the world.' Shiaka was in intensive therapy for years. The therapy helped but, much like the scars on her body, the ones on her psyche will never fully heal.

From the ages of 8 to 14, she was homeschooled by her father, and grew closer to her family than ever before. Things were going well for her. So well that her therapist decided that it would be best if Shiaka started attending high school. Shiaka and her family moved to Oransen back in 2006, when she was 9, so she attended Oransen High. A place where she was able to make friends, *true friends*, for the first time in her life.

I thought about this story extensively, recounting the details and just trying to comprehend the trauma that Shiaka must feel so often. Hell, during my fourth period, Psychology, I couldn't help but use what little I knew about the subject from a few months of class to try to examine Shiaka's mental state. I mean, using Erik Erikson's stages of Psychological development, I'd say that she more or less failed to get every virtue she should have gotten within the first decade of her life. Fuck, the fact that she even is *somewhat functional* in society, and never seriously thought about *suicide* or anything of the sort, it's nothing short of amazing to me. She is such a strong and brave young woman...

She is timid, but the fact that she is even willing to do this sort of thing with us, that she volunteered to swap bodies with Zoe today and Terra tomorrow... it really speaks to her resolve. To her desire to improve herself and grow stronger despite her deep wounds. I admire her resolve and, if I was in a similar situation, I doubt I would be able to ever recover as well as she has.

Verde: ...

...

Verde: ...

I'll just move along and say that Psychology was uneventful. I just scribbled down some notes and looked at the teacher while pondering Shiaka's past.

Fifth period was my lunch period, and I quickly made my way through the hallways of people who towered over me and to room number 1337. Yes, really. It's just the numbering scheme our school has, I guess.

It was a far better environment to eat lunch than the cafeteria, where you have over a hundred kids talking over each other in a big echoey room. Normally, rooms like this would be off-limits to students outside of class time. However, Maxxie was buddy-bud with the teacher who normally used this room, and they had no problem letting us four honor roll kids use it for our lunch periods. Well, so long as we cleaned up afterwards. Which we *a/ways* did.

I slyly opened the door to room 1337 and was met with Maxxie(J), Zoe(M), and Shiaka(Z), already immersed in a typical lunchtime conversation. It was a mostly familiar sight, but there was still something surreal about seeing my friends all shuffled around like this. Seeing my original body talk with such enthusiasm. Seeing Zoe's original body look so passive. And seeing Maxxie's original body act in such a regimented manner.

"—Nah, I don't feel winded or anything," Maxxie(J) said, in the middle of a conversation. "I'm just a bit upset at how... meh I feel. I mean, I guess I shouldn't expect Jady-poo's bod to be a ten on ten, but... I just really like the idea of working my ass off and then rubbing one out."

"Were you *seriously* going to masturbate in the little boy's room?" I asked Maxxie(J) with a sigh.

"I would have asked for your permission first," Maxxie(J) clarified. "And I'd be secretive about it, using one of the little veggie baggies you bring with you for lunch as a semen receptacle. I mean, that's what I used for the first couple faps."

"Wait, are boys supposed to masturbate in *plastic bags*? I thought they used lotion to hide away the... stuff and then clean it with tissues." Shiaka(Z) asked, visually regretting her choice of words.

"If we are starting this conversation with such a lowly subject matter, let's start with a baseline question. How often do you masturbate, Maxxie?" Zoe(M) asked, abandoning his impersonation as nobody ever bothered us in this room.

"Um... hehehe, didn't we go over this before?" Maxxie(J) asked with a giggle. "I mean, I don't have a schedule, but I do it a couple of times a week, maybe a couple times every day if I'm in a mood. It depends on what I feel like then and there and if I wanna fap then what do I fap to? It could be dudes, ladies, futanari, anthros, banging, fapping, transformation, or sometimes no nudes at all. I am an equal opportunity smut consumer and peddler. 'Cept for bindings, pee, poop, farts, squid tits, spiders, red candle wax, binder clips, and rape, in general. They're all kinda wack, so I uncheck those boxes. And in case you're worried by this answer, I've gone on a couple of dry seasons. It's refreshing to get away from it all, and it always feels real nice to return to the fap factory. So, do any of you fellas have half as much to say about your masturbation times?" Maxxie(J) answered, tossing the question back at us.

"Over the course of four years, I've done it about five times." I answered, stretching three and a half years to four.

"Once. I made a mess when I was twelve and... that was about it." Shiaka(Z) responded, painting a less than vivid picture.

"I have had—" Zoe(M) began.

"No, no, no, add in some of your trademark Maxxisaurus Omega flair. C'mon, you do me *super well*! Let yourself loose, you silly goose!" Maxxie(J) instructed Zoe(M)

"My history of fap-it-tude is un-four-chan-eight-lee *super tiny*. I only ever got meself a *single* ejaculate and that was just my dumb brain being a dumb idiot and deciding to have my schlong go squirt while taking a sleep. These hands have never been consumed by the thing that there *brobble* said was sin for some stupid raisin." Zoe(M) answered, going along with the bit.

"Nice!" Maxxie(J) shouted. "You fall down that well quite well, just be sure to keep a rope with you or else you will be stuck there until a pillar man falls in and *dies*. Or maybe a flood will bring you to a water-some grave of cold algies..."

"...*Oh goodness*, there are two of them now," I said, jokingly. "Before we *all* become infected by your Maxxie-isms, let's switch topics and talk about our days."

"Okie doke!" Maxxie(J) said as she slammed her hands against the table. "Lemme start with the good parts. Gotta say, I'm digging the boosted height and trim waistline. It makes me feel like I'm skidding the rim of a whole new kind of sexy! It's pretty cool that I can jog a couple of laps with relative ease. And dicks... dicks are just really cool, and they absolutely lived up to my expectations. They're not better, not worse, they are *exactly* as good as I thought they would be! Alas, for as much as I wanna go wild with this body, I gotta keep up appearances. No shade on you Jad, but your day to day is sorta dull. I gotta stay quiet, keep a serious face, and act like I am doing something important when really, I'm just thinking of how cool dicks are and how much I miss my *mystical drink*!"

"Wowzers, that there was awfully punctual all things considered," Zoe(M) began, preparing to go on a tirade about his new body. "As for me, I'm also experiencing a *new kind of sexy*, I think it's good, nice, cool, tight, great, radical, awesome, extreme, and all those other words *Sonic Adventure 2* gave you when you styled on some fools. I feel like I can really do whatever I feel like, and don't need to keep up much of an appearance, you know, let my hair down and stuff."

"I think the worst, or at least *weirdest*, thing about all of this is the height changes," Zoe(M) continued. "When I was Shiaka yesterday, I could feel my mind adjusting to my new *proportions*. I felt phantom pains all over the darn place as I tried to get used to being such a shorty. And there was this... wack-ass dissonance going through my head as I looked around, as everything looked just *uncannily* bigger. When in reality, I'm just smaller. I'd say I was not a fan, but it's actually pretty cool seeing the world at different scales. It makes the mundane sixty percent cooler!"

"*Oh my gush*!" Zoe(M) shouted, "then there's this *delicious* energetic feeling coursing through my veins! I know you like to claim it's because of that Charm Tea of yours, Maxxie, but this stems *far deeper*. I lack much evidence to prove it, but I believe that your body produces more

'energy' than a normal person. With this amount of adrenaline coursing through my person, I feel as if I could *take on the world, crush all who oppose me* and build the empire that I have been dreaming of for a decade... Just kidding, hehe."

Zoe ended his spiel by bonking himself on his head with a light tap, winking, and poking out his tongue.

"Um, if we are following a pattern, I guess I should go next," Shiaka(Z) muttered. "I am not particularly comfortable in your body, Zoe. I feel so big, so strong, so tall that it feels strange doing just about anything. I try to open a door and feel like I'm about to yank it off. I walk through the halls and look over everybody, even the teachers and most male athletes. This all feels like a big, weird dream that I am not waking up from, and I... kinda want to."

"Ah, Shit Shi-Shi, I never thought you would be that uncomfortable in Zoe." Maxxie(J) muttered.

"No, no. I agreed to this, and I guess it is nice to know these things." Shiaka(Z) meekly replied, looking toward the floor.

"We could switch back, you know. We already experienced a sizeable chunk of one another's daily life, and have gathered enough information for a more structured discussion on a later date." Zoe(M) explained.

"I... I can do this. I— I simply needed to vent to someone about my frustrations and uncertainties. Now that my grievances have been aired, you do not need to worry about me. ...*You don't need to worry about me so much.*" Shiaka(Z) said, easing back into a Zoe impersonation.

"I, um... moving on," I began, desperate for a transition, "building off of what Zoe said, the one thing that got to me was just how short I was. I know I've been this short in the past, but it's been so long, and the last time I was Shiaka's height was back in middle school. Back when there weren't these 6 foot tall giants roaming the halls, towering over me as I tried making my way to class. It's all so bizarre... wouldn't you agree, Zoe?"

"Oh, *absolutely*. The length of my limbs, the size of the world, it all vaguely *reminded* me of my childhood. However, when compared to my usual perspective of the world, the contrast was rather extreme." Zoe(M) added.

"There is a certain joy to being so small and light, but I also feel very dainty and... weak," I added. "I just got back from Strength and Conditioning and... just using the elliptical took quite a lot out of me. I kind of wish you worked out a little more."

"Sorry," Shiaka(Z) began. "It... has never been a goal of mine to get strong, and I guess I never really have been a fan of the feeling of fatigue. It... it reminds me of my scars."

“Oh... I’m sorry Shiaka, I didn’t mean to blame you or anything, I was just—”

“It’s okay, Jad. I understand your frustration. I... think I might feel the same way after I spend enough time in other people’s bodies. This is all so much for me to take in but... maybe this can help me get over some of my trauma. Just maybe...”

AS an awkward silence gathered in this room, Maxxie(J) clapped her hands and posed a critical question.

“Did y’all piss yet?”

We all answered with some variation of no, causing Maxxie(J) to shake her head while going tsk-tsk.

“Well then, I say we should remedy that, and, you know, maybe we can even try—”

“Hahaha, *no!* We are *not* masturbating in a school restroom, Maxxie. *Stop asking!*” Zoe(M) replied with a stern tone.

After one plan got the boot, Maxxie began leading the four of us to the nearby restrooms. I already talked about what it felt like peeing as Maxxie, it was pretty much no different in this body. I just sat, calmed myself, and winced a little as I heard the spraying sound escape my crotch. It sounded... strange. I guess I always assumed that girls were silent when they peed. Or, at the very least, it wasn’t louder than when I sat down to pee.

Regardless, the only difference between peeing as Maxxie and peeing as Shiaka is that Maxxie’s rear snugly fit over the toilet seat. With Shiaka’s tiny heiny, I was lowkey worried that I would fall through the seat. Fortunately, that did not happen, allowing Zoe(M) and I to do our business in relative peace.

“So, how was it?” I asked him while we washed our hands.

“I already peed as Shiaka yesterday, and... it really is just urinating with a shorter urethra. Nothing that special,” Zoe(M) said with a shrug.

We then left the restrooms and waited for Maxxie(J) and Shiaka(Z) to finish up. A minute later, I saw Shiaka(Z) shuffle out of the restroom, a look of horror on her face, and a... sizable hard-on pressing against her pants.

“Yeah, she didn’t even pee like a man, she went sitting down.” Maxxie(J) said as she left the restroom. “C’mon, girl. Don’t waste opportunities like this.”

"I didn't want to make a *mess*, so I sat down, but... *it didn't go*. I began poking it and... it got bigger. It hasn't gone down yet..." Shiaka(Z) whispered.

We then made our way back to Classroom 1337, where Maxxie regaled us with an idea she thought up: The Crotch Scooper. An ice cream scooper that could be used to replace genitalia. That led to a monster of a lunchtime conversation involving futanari fetishists, the appeal of male pregnancy fetishes, the logistics of pushing a child out of one's penis, and the 'null sexers'.

...You have this really smug look on your face, Verde.

Verde: *Oh, I know. I'm just pleased with my decision.*

Your decision to do what?

Verde: *Explanations will come at a later time, but for now, I am very pleased that I chose to conduct this experiment with you and your friends. So thank you.*

Um... no problem?

Verde: *Oh, so is that the new way of saying you're welcome?*

I... I really do hate that phrase, as I do not get why it exists other than expressing that you acknowledged that somebody thanked you. I normally just say no problem instead, but that has this snarky undercurrent to it as well. I guess it is better than the alternative but— *ugh!* English is such a stupid language... Actually, where you the-

Verde: *Oh, I did not create English, it was in existence before I gained my abilities, and I simply had a fondness for the language, as it is my native tongue.*

...I take it the question that popped into my head will also be answered at the end of this whole thing, right?

Verde: *Most certainly Mx Novus.*

...What?

Verde: *It is a gender neutral version of miss and mister.*

Oh... and why did you use it to address me?

Verde: *I felt like it, simple as that.*

...You're lucky you're cute, you know that?

Session 11: Finer Foreshadowing



Sixth period was College Prep, an English course where there was a discussion of a book I had not read, but I still took notes to keep up appearances at the very least. Nobody talked to me, which is what I wanted, and the whole thing was about as uneventful as could be. I did muse about the minutiae of my current body a bit, but beyond that, there really is nothing to talk about until seventh period.

I walked into the class, Consumer Education, feeling a bit lost before being spying Shiaka(Z), who quickly gestured over to me, as she and Zoe sat next to each other up in the front of the classroom.

"Didn't you read my notes?" Shiaka(Z) asked, sounding a bit concerned.

"Yeah, I did— we are just watching a video and taking notes, correct?" I timidly replied, my voice shaky after hearing Shiaka(Z) speak with such a serious tone.

"Yes, and we should keep quiet for the entire class because of that... just so we don't get in trouble, you know." Shiaka(Z) explained as she tried, and failed, to adopt a more lax tone.

I did as she requested, kept my mouth shut for the entire period, and... I was pretty worried throughout. Having Shiaka(Z) sitting right next to me made me feel as if I was being constantly

judged on how well I impersonated her. Because of this, I wound up overthinking and over-analyzing every little thing I was doing. From how I was writing notes to how I was sitting. I know that I should not have felt such concern, but I nevertheless spent the period wrapped in concern. Shiaka(Z) was right next to me and, at any moment, could chide me for my performance... even though that was *completely* against her nature.

In spite of my paranoia, I still performed the task of watching the short film and taking notes, all until the bell rang, urging me to trot off to my next destination: My College Financial Accounting class.

The classroom was a computer lab, with about a dozen PCs on both sides of the room, every desk fitting two people, and a wall coated in old CD-ROMs. Most of them for additional AOL hours, meaning they were older than me, or free software trials, which were probably also older than me.

Anyhow, I knew where I had to sit in this class, as Shiaka(Z) and I normally shared a desk, and about a minute later, Maxxie(J) came waltzing into the room, where she immediately plopped her butt next to mine.

“So *Shiaka*, what exactly do we have planned for today?” Maxxie(J) asked after glancing around to see a... 75% full classroom, which was the theme of the day.

“Did you read the notes I left you?” I asked her with a sigh.

“Well, I figured that with you right next to me, I’d get all the directions I needed.”

“We’re just watching a documentary, likely due to how five students are absent today, and we just wrapped up a chapter on Thursday.”

“How lax is the teach? ...Erm, I mean, what’s the teacher’s *lollygagging policy*?”

“*Jad*, just try to pay attention to the film, you shouldn’t even bother logging into your computer—it would disturb those in the back rows anyhow. We also don’t need to take notes on this.”

“Wait, really?” A chipper voice asked from behind me.

I quickly swiveled around in my chair and turned to face Anita Neukar, a classmate who I knew decently well and worked with a few times before, but I would not call us friends. Although she oddly enough held a long-standing friendship with Vivi Gaimz, who was also behind me in my Calculus class earlier today. It was a curious pairing given how the two seemed like two ships whose paths would never cross.

As a person, Anita was pretty lax on all fronts while exerting a friendly and bright persona that more or less contrasts with Vivi's serious nature and to-the-point dialect. In addition to that, Anita, not unlike Shiaka, is something an— and I hope this does not sound racist— *ethnic abnormality*. As she was half Black, half White— which is pretty normal— but she also had grayish eyes, and stark white platinum blonde hair.

Hair that she kept in a long ponytail, with bangs covering her forehead, and long clumps of hair that dangled in front of her ears, stopping at her jawline. She stood 184 centimeters tall and possessed a lean and athletic body, as you would expect of somebody on the school track team. Oh, and she was wearing what would normally be dubbed a male uniform, of a violet shirt, off-white blazer, and off-white slacks. But it was fitted for women.

“Um, yes. I mean, I doubt he would give us an assignment when a sizable chunk of the class is missing. P-Plus, he does not seem to be the kind of person who would test us on a film we cannot easily review.” I explained to Anita.

As I spoke to her, I found myself fiddling with my fingers and avoiding eye contact with her. I was not expecting to talk to someone else, much less have a close relationship be interrupted so suddenly, so I naturally entered into a nervous stupor of sorts. Which was *technically* in character for Shiaka.

“Aw, c'mon Shiaka, I'm not gonna hurt you,” Anita said in a sing-song voice as she prepared to tussle my hair.

I let her get in two strokes before I realized what was happening, and that Shiaka very would *not* be okay with this. Desperate to maintain my image, I quickly tumbled out of the chair and ended up falling onto the tile classroom floor.

“Whoa, you alright Shiaka?” Anita asked as she lent her hand out to help me up, looking positively *massive* from my current angle.

“Anita, didn't I— didn't *Maxxie* tell you about Shiaka's—” Maxxie(J) explained, making a classic flub.

“*Oh shit*, right. Oh my goodness, Shiaka, I am so *sorry*! I... I'll just leave you be.” Anita exclaimed before running away with her tail between her legs.

“You alright?” Maxxie(J) asked me as I was getting up.

“Yes, I just... thought it felt nice, but then she touched the head scar and... yeah. I thought I had to do... *something*.”

Upon letting out a sigh, I began poking at the small part on Shiaka's scalp where hair no longer grows. It was another injury inflicted by the two monsters who tried to murder Shiaka. While not very noticeable, touching it stirred up *bad* memories for Shiaka. It was a part of her body that, much like her torso, *nobody* was permitted to touch without her direct permission.

After that interaction, the period was pretty mundane. We just watched the first thirty-something minutes of *Enron: The Smartest Guys In The Room*, while Maxxie(J) kept trying to browse NeoGaf on my phone, as she was very *clearly* uninterested in the film. I was a bit disappointed by her attention span, but I assumed she was fed up with a day in my shoes, and wanted to get back to her original body. Or maybe she was just hungry because we all forgot to eat lunch... likely more the latter than the former.

Anyhow, eighth period ended sooner than later, and Maxxie(J) and I decided to head back to room 1337 for our final period. It was a free period for all of us except for Zoe, or Shiaka(Z) at the moment, which we spent in room 1337 after signing in at the IRC. It was a somewhat improper practice, as students are supposed to spend their study halls in designated rooms, but my school was pretty lax about what you did with your free periods so long as your grades were good. Hell, we could've left the building if we wanted to. The front office staff wouldn't stop us.

Anyhow, after the three of us returned to the miniature classroom, Maxxie resumed the lewd conversation we had a few periods ago.

"So Zoe, you really *never* fapped before?" Maxxie(J) asked, causing me to wince as I heard my original body say the word 'fapped'.

"No. I was unaware of how it even worked until you explained the motion to me, remember?" Zoe(M) sternly replied.

"I... don't remember. I don't remember a lot of the things I do. Hell, I'd forget my own name if I didn't etch it into my bedroom door." Maxxie(J) answered with a smug smirk.

"I think Maxxie is more curious about the *reason* why you never masturbated," I added.

"It provides a rush of chemicals through one's body that creates a pleasant feeling, but is largely unnecessary. ...Plus, my mother was dissatisfied with how I had a wet dream and told me to avoid masturbation. Likely due to some old country superstition." Zoe(M) explained, an awkward expression on his face.

"Oh for the love of Frank's fudge-filled fudge 'ems— How many times have I said that shame is for dummies? If it feels good and doesn't hurt nobody, then go ahead and do it to your heart's content, you silly goose" Maxxie(J) remarked.

"Yes, we *always* seem to reach this conclusion, don't we?" Zoe(M) dryly questioned.

“Conversations are like Pachinko balls. You can’t really tell where they’re going, or something. Nobody knows how they work and people sell them to the yakuza for prizes... I think. Anyway, if you want, you can, y’know, give my neko-neko fun zone a puff-puff after school if doing it in public doesn’t give you the thrilly frills.” Maxxie(J) said as she glared at Zoe(M)’s skirt.

“We are not going to have a masturbation party... fap party... we are not watering the fap tree!” I said to Maxxie(J), trying to go along with her nonsense.

“Fine, *mom!* I’ll just shift over to the big Q. Who or what makes you want to wiggle your diddler, Zoe-san?”

“I have told you that I am heterosexual, several times in fact.”

“Yeah, but what do you like in a lady? Shins, elbows, feet, what? Give me the character sheet for Zoe Xing’s waifu!”

“Simply because I have a basic sexual attraction to women does not mean I am controlled by that sexuality. While I understand your desire for sex to be viewed as a more casual activity, I personally don’t have much interest in it. If I do get married, it would be with a woman who I admire as a person, and not for their physical attraction. That said, I would want my hypothetical children to have good genes, so I would certainly take appearances into consideration.” Zoe(M) sternly replied.

“Damn. You sure are one calculating gun of a son.” Maxxie(J) whispered.

“You say that as if I should feel bad about that... Actually, I should apologize for my behavior. Simply keeping up your chipper attitude during your classes takes a lot of effort on my part. Plus the missing meal is getting to me.”

“Yep, I am a bit of a jerk when my belly’s empty, and I guess that’s a bod-based trait, not a mental one.” Maxxie(J) said, patting her stomach in response.

It only took a few pats before Maxxie(J)’s hand landed on her crotch, where she began patting her erect penis, with two layers of clothing blocking it, of course.

“Oh right, we never talked about the locker rooms, did we?” Maxxie(J) blurted out.

“Yeah, we didn’t... nothing very interesting happened to me.” I added, wanting to get involved in the conversation again. “I admittedly gave a light rub to my, erm, Shiaka’s—” I said.

“Her neko hole?” Maxxie(J) interjected.

“What?” I replied.

“Well, neko means cat, and what on a woman is—”

“No! I just lightly rubbed the breasts— while keeping the bra on. I... was just curious what that felt like,” I confessed.

“You might not have touched... there, Jad, but I did,” Zoe(M) declared.

“Wait, what?” Maxxie(J) said with fire in her eyes.

“I was simply curious about the vagina’s sensitivity. The experience was a tad... alarming, but also strangely enticing. I find this curious given my disinterest in sexual stimulation. Yet, perhaps, by being in a body more *sexually expressive*, having masturbated *hundreds of times* from what you’ve told us, I am becoming more inclined to indulge in this type of stimuli.” Zoe(M) theorized, placing his tiny chin into his hand.

Before Maxxie could grill Zoe(M) for such feats of perversion, the door to room 1337 slammed open. We all diverted our attention to it and were greeted by a nervous-looking Shiaka(Z).

“Sorry for intruding. Zoe, your AP Microeconomics teacher dismissed the class early as only 14 of the 21 class members came today.”

As Shiaka(Z) made her excuse, she sat down at one of the desks.

“I suppose that I should have expected as much. For an AP course, the students in it are awfully irresponsible.” Zoe(M) remarked.

“Well, you came in right in the middle of our fap talk, but I take it your performance during lunch told us *all* we needed to know.” Maxxie(J) commented, looking down at Shiaka(Z)’s crotch.

Shiaka(Z) gave Maxxie(J) what was probably meant to be a disgruntled look in response. But with her more intimidating facial features, she looked like she was going to hit Maxxie(J) for making such a comment.

“I do not intend to be rude, but is there anything I should know about your behavior throughout the day?” Zoe(M) questioned Shiaka(Z), almost folding his arms over his breasts.

“I... I tried to stay out of trouble, but when Maxxie and I were in Strength and Conditioning, we ran into Yuccot Kikansky.”

As Shiaka(Z) mentioned that name, all three of us groaned in unison.

You see, Yuccot Kikansky is an obnoxious and overweight little moron. He's a super senior, because he refused to open up a desk book or do the bare minimum in his classes. If he had something wrong with him, like ADHD or a rough life, I could give him a bit of sympathy. But as far as I could tell... he is just a lazy and disrespectful well-off prick. Someone who has been given every opportunity to put his life together and never put forth the effort to pursue any of them. He's also rather short, about an inch taller than Shiaka's short original body, yet weighs about twice as much at 90 kilograms.

Thanks to our class schedules, Zoe and I had to see this man every day in Strength and Conditioning. There, he would distract the rest of the class, do his best to avoid any work, and then be awarded a zero for the day— not that he really cared though. He struck me as the sort of person who would age fast and die young, refusing to put in even the most basic amount of effort into the most minor of tasks.

Backstory aside, Maxxie(J) decided to lead the storytelling here instead of Shiaka(Z).

"Yeah, after a little *changing incident* — I got a boner, while undressing, but nobody saw it— Shiaka and I were in our little tracksuits, looking *so cute*. We went into the... what's the name again, the gym with the rock-climbing wall and the ceiling ropes full of shuttlecocks? Anyhow, we were just going to do some light jogging, chatting a bit about proportions, the prominence of pretty boys in Japanese media, and retractable penises. You know, the usual shit."

"You asked whether I would want a retractable penis, and I quickly said no. We did not *talk* about them." Shiaka(Z) plainly retorted.

"Whatevs," Maxxie said, waving away Shiaka(Z)'s comment. "Anywho, we just so happened to have Yuccot waddle up to us, and... I'm pretty sure he misheard us or just inferred we were talking about girls. We *kinda* were, but he took it to a sexual place. Being the badical bestie that I be, I played the sitch with J-Style and told him that I was not into that sort of thing. That I, *Jad Novus*, was an *asexual*! Yuccot, the dork, only understood two sexualities, and thought that being asexual meant that 'Zoe' and I were 'butt buds'." Maxxie(J) continued, flailing around her right hand as she spoke.

"I tried explaining to Yuccot that sexuality was fluid, diverse, and was not tied to the binaries of gay and straight." Shiaka(Z) elaborated.

"Yuccot *briefly* tried expanding his scope of sexuality, but went back to square one by dismissing subdued sexualities as, "gay-ass bullshit." So Shiaka told him off for being such an idiot, saying not everybody had to be such a... ugh, you worded it real nicely too..." Maxxie(J) said as she clenched her temple.

"I said that he was a 'pitiful simpleton who lacks any true understanding of humanity' for daring to make such a claim. I then said he was 'nothing but a burden on society, ignorant of the world

around him,’ and pointed out how he was ‘dismissive of all new information that people try to bestow upon him.’” Shiaka(Z) recounted.

“Not precisely how I would phrase it, but that was quite good, Shiaka.” Zoe(M) complimented Shiaka(Z)..

“With that, Yuccot called us a pair of *lowercase F-bombs*, and *uppercase F-bombed* off for the rest of the period. With that sour experience in my mind, I started talking about the time Yuccot told me about the box of kittens he threw into a river— which Shiaka said was ‘just a rumor.’ But, I dunno, it seems pretty darn plausible.” Maxxie(J) mused.

“Where would he have gotten the kittens anyway?” I asked.

“He could have gotten them from a pet store and killed them for fun. Besides, you remember *the Vivi Gaimz incident*. Really surprised he was not outright expelled for the shit he said. I mean, that’s on the level of bad as *Master of Martial Hearts*. ... I still gots no clue how the studio behind *Elfen Lied* could ever make that steamy hot pile of bloodstained feces...” Maxxie(J) said, ending her story and starting up a new topic.

“Is *Elfen Lied* anime with the naked girl with pink hair and horns?” Shiaka(Z) cautiously asked.

“Yes, it is also something that *should not* be viewed by minors, but Maxxie saw it when she was... nine?” Zoe(M) said with a stern look on his face, which just looked wrong.

“Spring break 2006, baby! Babs took me to the DVD and VHS shop and I got to pick out whatever I wanted for getting good grades on my tests. I snuck into the back of the store and picked out the coolest box I could find in, like, ten seconds. I showed her the box and she bought it for me, and I stayed up all night watching it. It. Was. The. Freaking. Best. Shit! No hyperbole or anything, but without that *little delight*, this Maxxie Flare would not exist, no way, no how!”

It was surreal seeing Maxxie(J) get so worked up when she was in my body. But it was another level of surreality when she sounded more enthusiastic about *Elfen Lied* than I have been about anything in my life.

“It also inspired you to take art classes over the summer... where you got in trouble for drawing naked ladies, right?” I added.

“Yeah, that was great... I drew nipples that looked like *gumdrops* back then,” Maxxie(J) said, a fondness in her voice.

With that, the bell rang as the clock struck 3:23, we promptly left room 1337, and walked out the front entrance, waving goodbye to the security guards.

Verde: *Don't you think it's odd that your school has security guards?*

Hmm? Not really. It's a government regulation.

Verde: *Yes, but is it not a bit unnecessary?*

Not really. School shootings still happen, Miss Dusk, and even if they only stand around, observing and reporting, they still keep some order. That, and they keep weirdos from walking in with a bunch of napalm so they can set the school on fire.

Verde: *Duly noted...*

Session 12: Dark Dreams Develop Despair



Upon exiting Oransen High, we went to Maxxie’s car, where we began the process of retrieving the VD— which was thankfully still in the glove compartment— and started undoing the swaps. Once everybody was back in their “birth bodies” as Maxxie called them, we took our usual seats in the car and Zoe began our ‘first day post-mortem.’

“Now that everybody is in their original body, do I need to remind you about how I would like for you all to provide a write-up of your experience in each other’s bodies?”

“Yeah, yeah. No need to *remind* us. How long does this need to be?” Maxxie grumbled.

“Ideally it would be just one or two pages, but feel free to say anything you want us to know about the experience,” Zoe explained.

“Didn’t we already talk about all that stuff?” Maxxie replied with a sigh.

“This is ultimately an experiment, and in an experiment, you should not simply casually look over the results. You need to approach the situation as scientifically as possible. You could complain, but remember, you *agreed* to this.” Zoe pointed out.

“Okay, okay, whatever you say, Dr. Xing...” Maxxie mumbled as she drove out of the parking lot.

"However, I still feel that we should have discussions about our experiences prior to writing, so I must ask you all, how do you all feel, returning to your own bodies?"

I took a minute to ponder Zoe's question. I certainly felt a lot bigger. I was still a pretty scrawny person, but I felt far less like I would be brushed aside by a strong enough breeze. Everything was reset to *normal*. But as I stared at my hands and saw myself in the rearview mirror, I couldn't help but feel that something was off, and I had absolutely no clue what. Perhaps I was just processing how what I viewed as normal truly was not normal for most other people. Perhaps I gained a greater understanding for how different the individual truly was. I did not ponder that idea in much detail before I responded with a very short and blasé answer.

"I feel fine, like this whole swap never happened... I'm also hungry, but that's to be expected."

"I feel the same," Shiaka chimed in. "Being back in my body makes the whole experience more... *unreal* when looking back at it. As if it was just part of a realistic and detailed dream."

"I can understand that feeling," I added. "But every time I swap, it feels more and more real, and after... however many times, I'm starting to get used to it."

"I know, right? I had all of these hopes that we would go through this flurry of experiences but... I guess no matter what bod you're rocking, school's still school. But even if this was a *bit* of a bust, I did get a bit closer to you, so I'd say it was well worth it. I mean, our Social Link's been maxed out at level ten for years now, but if there's any way to bring it to eleven, this is probably it."

"Please try to be more thorough in your reflection, Maxxie..." Zoe sighed.

"I'll be so thorough I'll be *thoroughly through!*" Maxxie quipped. "You know I can write decently if I wanna, and I wanna lube your gears and get your brain working on some dope-ass theories!"

Shortly after that exchange, the conversation crawled to a trickle as Maxxie dropped off Shiaka, Zoe, and eventually myself.

"See ya later Jad. I'll be sure to keep my body nice and warm, just how you like it!" Maxxie said as she drove off.

I sighed as she left and wandered into my house, greeted my mother, and walked up to my bedroom, where I ate my lunch at about 15:45.

After doing my usual after-school ritual of checking through my usual RSS feeds, I then got to work on my write up for my day as Shiaka and my performance as her. Doing that, it... It got me thinking about myself a lot.

How I felt I put in the least effort of anyone in impersonating the person I appeared to be.

How I was unable to articulate... everything that I liked about being in the body of Shiaka.

How I really *fit in* amongst people I have considered to be my friends for several years.

Zoe was this incredibly diligent person who pretty much always had a level head, and would never blindly rush into anything without some semblance of a plan. He is a very intelligent young man who was born into a poor family, his father died when he was 5-years-old, and his mother busted her ass trying to raise him. ...At least until Maxxie's family gave her a well-paying job that she was proficient at. He's been through some shit, and he is such a well-balanced person because of that.

Shiaka... I already talked about what she went through when she was a child. But while most people would be just completely, utterly destroyed by that, either removing themselves from society or outright killing themselves, she never lost her resolve. She's become so much more comfortable around all of us, people in general, since she was the January Girl who ran away whenever somebody tried talking to her. On top of that, she is such a smart little delight, and when it comes to pretty much anything having to do with technology or computers, she knows her stuff. I mean, her programming skills are pretty impressive for someone her age, and she's been making games, small little prototypes mostly, since sixth grade.

Maxxie... She is such a fun and weird person who I honestly cannot imagine life without. She does have a bit of an organizational problem. But the fact that she can be so dedicated to something and produce such amazing illustrations or digital paintings, it makes me feel like the most incompetent and worthless sack of fucking shit in the world. She has a following of about four thousand people at this point, but she's not in it for anything but the craft. Plus, she is so open and easygoing, trying to be as nice as she can to people who give her the time of day, it just...

I feel like I don't *deserve* to be her best friend. The idea of being in her body again, of having her trust me to that extent, it honestly made me feel a bit ill.

I felt this disgusting flavor of guilt when I was unable to go about her wishes to masturbate in her body. I hated myself for lacking the style and grace she flaunted so effortlessly in handling her sister's confession of being transgender...

And Terra, her ability to be so strong and tell somebody about something that is just so...

Verde: *Jad... are you okay?*

Oh yeah, I just have tears flowing down my face as I recall the sense of worthlessness I felt as I realized that my friends are all *far better people* than me! Compared to them, I'm just a piece of festering fecal matter littering this planet, contributing to all of its fucking problems! I've never fucking been better!

Verde: *I— I'm sorry if that was the wrong thing to say...*

You know so much, but you don't know how to talk to people? Shit. I forgot these feelings because of what you did to my memories and now... now they are *all* flowing back. Because *you wanted this*, right?

Verde: *I— I really don't talk to a lot of people, but, I... I'm sorry about this Jad. I— I should just leave.*

Verde: **Poof**

Verde? ...I— I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings... Yeah, I am the worst. The. Fucking. Worst!

...

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...

I wasn't as vulgar about my despair at the time, I was just sad. I was sad, and I meandered about, doing my usual night rituals, before wandering into bed around 21:00. Hoping that I could sleep this depression away. Instead, I had a dream. I don't often have dreams and... the last one I can remember involves the BBC recycling coffee cups and coffee in order to save their nation from being bought by the Dutch. There was also a little girl in a lobster outfit who shouted, "SIDS, Aurora." So, yeah, they're mostly nonsense. The one I had that night placed me in Maxxie's body— not that it was the *first* dream I ever had where I was Maxxie, but, you know...

I was talking to a very tall woman, with a dark skin tone. She had short but distinctly feminine hair, and was dressed in a black and red suit. She kept asking me questions which made no sense, stuff like "would you do the borders by next day?" and "if free radical conception is only theoretical, what shape and color will it manifest itself as?" You know, nonsense that I responded to with more nonsense. "Needn't we borrow ourselves one dark Nippon burger?" and "if we are not oneself can there be a Tuesday?" These nonsense answers for dream people were apparently not the ones this dream woman wanted, as she laughed whenever I said them.

Eventually, she pulled a mirror from her cleavage, which she used to show me my reflection. To show me Maxxie's face. This dream woman then looked at herself in the mirror... causing her to

throw a temper tantrum like a small child. She began bashing her shoes against the floor, and grabbed my naked body by the neck before shoving my body down to the ground. Incapacitated, she brought her hands to my lips, pulling them back with enough force to snap my gums apart. I shrieked as this happened, but I was too shocked to fight back against this attacker. Too shocked to do anything as I felt a layer of skin separate from my flesh.

The woman held the sheath of skin above me, the skin of Maxxie, only for her to bundle it up and throw it aside. She then looked down at me once more and grabbed my hand, bringing it to my face. I saw the same hand I had known for all my life. It was *my hand*. After showing me this, the dream woman. She then stared at me, forcing me to gaze at her uncanny crimson irises her pupils looked up and down my body.

Seconds later, the woman stood above me... and began shoving one of her feet into my mouth. She jammed it down my throat, through my innards and, soon enough, the rest of her body followed.

It was all a bizarre and surreal sensation at the time, but looking back, it was clear what she was trying to do. Trying to wedge herself into my person, between my bones and organs, in order to wear my body like a suit, much like I had worn Maxxie's. Her body shrunk to fit within my frame. I felt her hands dig into mine, her fingers wearing mine like a glove, and her head morphing to fit within my skull. Or, at least I thought it was my skill.

As this continued, I lost the ability to move. To speak. To do anything but feel and perceive the world around me. As I accepted this lack of autonomy, I began to stand up but not by my own fruition. The woman inside me forced me to stand up.

After looking down at my form, dressed in my school uniform, her attention was diverted elsewhere. Turning my head, she saw Maxxie, waving at me, clearly seeing 'me' as Jad. She had no idea that this woman burrowed herself inside me. That she was the one who was waving back at her and walking toward her. Then, once Maxxie was within arm's length, the woman leapt at Maxxie, pinning her against the ground, where she bit open Maxxie's throat.

As Maxxie realized what was happening, she cried out in pain, and then... then I woke up in a cold sweat, nervous. I was unsure of what had happened and, at the same time, eager to forget whatever the hell I had been subjected to...

...

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...

No comment, Verde? Fine. I guess I'll just finish this story without you. Not like there's much left to cover.

Session 13: Back 2 Best Girl



...Still nothing from you Verde? *Fine.*

Alright, so, the morning of November 25th, 2014. I woke up *stupid* early, at about 5:30, my body damp from the terror induced sweating. I took a sigh as I realized that it was all a dream, that my skin wasn't ripped off, and that my body wasn't stolen by some mysterious dream woman. As I walked out of my bedroom, I realized just how early it was. So early that my mother was still asleep, and the sun hadn't risen.

Instead of heading back to sleep, I decided to get started on my day... and I decided to begin it with a shower to rid myself of my teenage bodily odor. It was more of a rinse than anything, a rinse that reaffirmed that I was, indeed, in my original body, and that things were *back to normal*. I dried myself off, put on my uniform, and was ready for school by 6:00. However, my early rising caused my mother to come into my room and have a word with me. Her hair was still down, and she was still in her pajamas.

"Hey, are you feeling alright sweetie?" My mother, Caroline, asked with her soft and soothing voice.

"Yeah, I just had a nightmare and couldn't get back to sleep," I answered, knowing that there would be follow-up questions.

"You sure that's it? You seemed a bit... out of it last night. Is everything alright?" My mother asked as she placed her hand on my shoulder.

"I was just feeling a little funny last night and wanted to get to bed early. I feel fine now," I answered, lying to both my mother and myself.

She looked at me as if she saw through my lie but did not want to say anything about it.

"Well, okay Jad. Just remember that you can talk to me about *anything*."

I left for Maxxie's at about 6:45, getting there a couple of minutes before seven. Babs was thankfully up and had taken care of Maxxie and Terra. I greeted Maxxie as she was sipping her Charm Tea, reminding her that we were bringing Terra with us today. She simply nodded in response, still taking in the rejuvenating effects of her Charm Tea. We eventually all got into Maxxie's car and picked up Zoe and Shiaka. I'm sorry if I'm skimming over this, but... I don't think you really care about all these details. Speak up if you have any objections.

...

...

...

I'll keep on going then.

I, myself, Jad Novus, looked like *trash* today. My skin was far paler than usual, I had some discoloration around my green eyes, and my mess of curly hair was still a bit damp as I left the house. I was in a navy dress shirt, with my dark gray pants. Same basic clothes as before, but in my disgruntled state of mind, I gravitated towards darker clothing. I dunno, I guess it's symbolic and all that crap.

Maxxie, Maxxisaurus Omega Flare, had brushed her hair today, presumably for me, but I could see the lack of sleep she got reflected in her brown, freckle covered face. She had on a pink blazer, a violet dress shirt underneath, blue-ribbon on her collar, skirt just above her knees of the same color, and some thigh-high white socks. She looked like quite a cutie, which made the idea of taking her body for the day all the more upsetting, as I'd be taking that cuteness away from her.

Zoe Xing was looking sharp as usual, his face stern-looking, slick black hair, and rectangular glasses that helped make him look more like a teacher than a student. An image reinforced by his tall and muscular build and his clothing. Today he had a black blazer, white dress shirt, black

pants, and a cobalt tie. I'd say that he looked like a typical young salaryman. You know, with him being half-Asian. But that'd probably sound racist or something.

Shiaka Kurokawa had a nervous look at her face, more so than usual. Her silky blonde hair gracefully draped over her shoulders, onto her other winter uniform. It was a simple white dress shirt with a cream-colored sweater vest, a knee-length dark navy skirt, and tan skin-colored stockings. She was fidgeting in the car, her bright blue eyes bouncing around like a trapped animal searching for a way out. Part of me wanted to say something, but I know that if something *truly* made her uncomfortable, she would say as much.

Terra Flare was the oddball amongst anybody who would take a look at our crew at the time, being a ten-year-old pre-transition transgirl, living as a boy for the time being. Today, she was dressed in a light sweater and jeans, as her school did not have a uniform policy.

We made a detour to Terra's school. The same private school that Maxxie attended before she headed over to Oransen Elementary School. With our destination in sight, Zoe pulled out the VD.

"I just want to make sure neither of you are having any second thoughts," Zoe said as he looked at Shiaka and Terra.

"I... I'd be lying if I said I wasn't, at least a little," Terra said, trying to sound more feminine than normal.

"I am indeed nervous. However, I believe I am— no, *I am* strong enough to go through this," Shiaka answered with a huff.

"Excellent. Now, how about you two?" Zoe asked, turning his attention to Maxxie and me.

"I *would* play the *Viewtiful Joe* 'just go for it' sound clip or the Amy Rose 'I'm getting excited' one. But neither sounds *quite right* in my head, so I'll just go with... yep-a-dep-a-yo-yo! Let's get this swap on!"

After saying that, Maxxie took a swig of her thermos full of Charm Tea. Which wouldn't really help *her*. It would just amp up whoever swapped into her body.

"Well, I don't know how to drive, so shouldn't we wait until we get to school?" I asked.

"Nah, I can just drive while I'm in Zoe's *sexy little bod!*" Maxxie flippantly replied.

"Ah, right, right, sorry, I didn't sleep all that well last night," I said as I rubbed the back of my head.

“Well, *that’s* good to know,” Zoe mumbled sarcastically.

With that, the three-part swap happened. Shiaka and Terra. Myself and Maxxie. And Zoe and Maxxie(J). Meaning it was Terra(S), Shiaka(T), Zoe(J), Maxxie(Z), and Jad(M) after the fact.

I found myself sinking into the sensations of Maxxie’s original body within a matter of seconds. Even on this freezing morning, it still instilled my soul with a sense of warmth. The clothes tightly hugged my frame, allowing me to embrace their soft texture. I could still taste bits of her Charm Tea resonating throughout my mouth. And as I looked down at myself, I couldn’t help but let out a girlish giggle. Maybe it has something to do with Maxxie’s usual energy, brain chemistry, and usual mood, but I simply felt *a lot* better just by being in this body. *It filled me with a warm and cozy feeling that I most enjoyed.*

After momentarily zoning out, I was called back to reality by the sound of Zoe’s original voice moaning in pleasure.

“Oh yes, this was one damn good idea. Chiseled features, toned bod, and, yep, a nice big one in the *sack!*”

I looked over to see Maxxie(Z) with a hand down her pants, her deep voice sounding... unsettling when paired with her usual cheery intonations.

“Please, try to control yourself when we arrive at school, Maxxie,” Zoe(J) groaned from the backseat.

“Shiaka, Terra, how are you two holding up?” I asked as I heard nothing but awkward grumbles from the two.

“I— oh, wow that is soft— so is her— my voice, I guess...” Terra(S) murmured as she glared down at her current body, one hand on her blonde hair, the other on her chest. Not in the sense that she was fondling it. She was just feeling it and examining the weight. At least, that’s what it looked like.

“Check-one-two— Hmm... This is certainly... different from before. Everything’s not as small as I expected too. I guess I didn’t grow much during puberty, so...” Shiaka(T) thought out loud, testing her prepubescent voice.

“Do you want one of us to walk you up to school-lu, Shi-Shi?” Maxxie(Z) asked, sounding *far* more creepy than she intended. ...Or, at least I hope so.

“Um, sure, I guess...” Shiaka(T) replied.

“Alrighty! ‘Maxxie,’ please walk your swissy to the land of education, edutainment, and moe memories!” Maxxie(Z) requested of me as Zoe(J) grumbled at her behavior.

“Ma— Zoe, for the last time, moe does not mean something nostalgic and good, ya nut can! True moe is... hang on, where’d I put that MP3 brick? I wanna preach my words with that one *Gurren Lagann* track playing softly on the car speakers.” I rambled, trying to get my Maxxie impression at ‘Maxxie-mum’ efficiency.

“You don’t bring that device to school because it has hentai music on it. Now walk your sister through the cold so she can finish her boyhood and begin her girlhood!” Maxxie(Z) shouted back at me, unbuckling her seatbelt.

“That won’t really happen for a few months, ya wisenheimer!” I said.

In retrospect, that was probably not the best thing to say. But it was true. Terra still had six months of fifth grade to complete before she could be a girl 24/7.

“It’s the big picture *Miss Flare*, now go and do your due diligence,” Maxxie(Z) said as she exited the car

“*Rawr!*”

As I shouted at Maxxie(Z), I grabbed Shiaka(T) from the middle backseat and began my ‘due diligence.’ As I stepped out of the car, I realized that Maxxie has chosen to wear shoes with a bit of a heel today. Nothing too intense, just an inch or so, but it was strange not having my feet on uneven surfaces. After I got my bearings, I grabbed onto Shiaka(T)’s hand and began walking up to the school with her. Looking around, I saw that the school was almost completely empty aside from two or three children on the playground... only to remember that it was 7:30 and elementary school didn’t start for another hour.

“Alright... ‘Terra,’ you sure you have everything you need?” I said, continuing to imitate Maxxie.

“I should be fine... sis. Terra... / left some notes in my backpack in case I get confused, and I can review them before school starts.”

I snickered as Shiaka(T) fell into her role so easily. I thought about giving her a pat on the head... but I didn’t want to risk triggering her before leaving her alone. At a building that, in some way, resembled the place where she was nearly killed.

“Yeah, and you’ll have plenty of time, as school doesn’t start for another hour... Sorry about that, but that’s the way the pancake flips!” I said with an awkward chuckle.

As I wandered back to the car, I felt guilty about leaving Shiaka(T) alone in a place she never once visited before. It was probably a decade since she last experienced that, as she always had us of her parents by her side. She knew to call any of us if she needed help, or she was slightly worried about anything, but there was still a tiny, almost insignificant, risk of something bad happening.

Shiaka said that she wanted to do this, that she was ready for this, but... this worry was enough to turn my smile upside down. I let out a hefty sigh as I returned to the car, this time entering the passenger seat, buckled up, and found myself gazing into the rearview mirror. I saw my disgruntled expression, and I hated it. I tried adopting a sly smirk in response, hoping that Maxxie's signature smile would help boost my spirits. But... it really didn't. Because I knew, the smile was not genuine.

"So, 'Shiaka,' how are you holding up?" Zoe(J) asked the woman next to him.

"Huh, do you— oh, sorry, I guess I should get used to that. Um, am I going to need to socialize a lot with others at school or..." Terra(S) murmured as she looked down at her cute little sweater vest and skirt.

"No. Both Terra and yourself are very reclusive young women who mostly interact with us. Simply stay quiet, follow the directions, give simple replies when prompted, and you should be fine." Maxxie(Z) said.

While she pulled off a good Zoe impression, she looked almost... annoyed. I was not sure if she was actually annoyed or trying to look serious but... wait, no it was *both*. It was *definitely* both.

"Alright, but the multiple class thing always worried me. I mean, that and the halls it just seems to be... a lot to take in." Terra(S) mumbled as she began curling up in her seat.

"Terra, look, you are a strong girl, you studied the school map, nobody will suspect anything even if you act a bit odd. Just keep a cool head and everything will be fine. Don't fall down the butthole of despair, for you have the ability to become the ultimate hope!" I said, channeling my optimism and Maxxie-isms.

"Ultimate hope? Terra never played *Danganronpa*, so she doesn't get the reference." Maxxie(Z) explained as she drove to our destination.

"Oh, wait, but I thought—" I stammered

"It's rated Mature, so I should not play it until I'm older." Terra(S) meekly explained.

"I would sooner comment about how its subject matter is *quite dark* when you get down to it," Zoe(J) explained. "The series centers around a group of high schoolers murdering one another in an ill-guided pursuit of freedom, which is made all the more foul by how—"

"A-buh-bup! Spoilers, dude!" Maxxie(Z) interjected.

"Well, the trailer for *Absolute Despair Girls* made the ending to the first game *super clear*," I added. "So I don't know if that is *actually* a spoiler. I mean, that one trailer is *basically* the ending of the first game," I commented.

"I swear, if that doesn't come out in the West, I'm gonna be one salty little clam, nipping on NIS America's bum." Maxxie(Z) ranted.

"Both *Danganronpa* titles did better than they expected in North America, so I'm sure it will be out sometime next year, in 2015."

"Yeah, it *better*... *Super DR 2: Sayonara Despair* is probably my game of the year."

"Zoe, you cleared twelve games that came out this year. Your GOTY status does not mean much."

"Yeah, but there honestly was not much competition this year, as developers have been slow to adapt to new hardware, and the bulk of major releases this year were exceptionally buggy or rough at launch. I mean, Ubisoft somehow managed to break *Tetris* for PS4. *Fucking TETRIS!*"

"I honestly thought that was a joke when I first heard the news," Zoe(J) butted in. "It is mechanically the same game that flawlessly ran on a GameBoy, yet it sometimes struggles to run on modern hardware. All due to... what was it, a friends list feature?"

"For reals, I thought these new consoles were *super easy* to develop for, since they're basically all PCs." Maxxie(Z) scoffed.

"I remember reading something on NeoGaf about how compliance has gotten a lot laxer and, because they got rid of patch limits, a lot of publishers are pushing games out early so they can patch them later," Terra(S) commented.

Yes, Maxxie had a policy where she did not want Terra to play Mature-rated video games until she was in middle school... but she let her browse *freaking NeoGaf*.

"It is all part of a troubling shift in the industry," Zoe(J) began. "While many titles have been patched extensively, issues persist for others. From general functionality issues to save errors, and so forth. They are deemed to be *acceptable* hindrances to the experience that are left untouched. Instead, the development resources that would be put into patches are placed into

the development of additional content. It is all part of an industrywide shift to present products more like services through a variety of downloadable extras. With the extras for some titles being so plentiful that a graph is required to understand what each edition of a game contains. It's an understandable business practice, to an extent, but it amounts to a worse product for customers such as ourselves. It is such a blasted shame..."

With that somber little note on the current state of the video game industry, we arrived at school, shared a brief reminder of when and where we would meet up, before going our separate ways.

Well, Zoe(J) and I both took the same path to our respective body's lockers, as Maxxie and I had lockers right next to each other thanks to a little request she put in with the school. This usually resulted in us having a conversation leading up to the first period. Despite being in swapped bodies, Zoe(J) and I continued that practice, musing over the game industry in nerdy detail. A conversation that only lasted until the ringing of a familiar bell that called Zoe(J) and I over to our Psychology class.

As expected, a large number of students had taken an early Thanksgiving break and decided to skip school. This meant that my class simply went through a review worksheet. It was simple, and I completed it with half of the period to spare. As such, I was left to observe my surroundings as I sipped the Charm Tea that I neglected during our car ride. Only a few sips were left, so I topped it off and unintentionally let out a very loud 'ah' to show my satisfaction with the drink. It was *delicious* and just drinking it made me feel like I could fight a bear and win. Just like Mamoru Takamura from *Hajime no Ippo*...

Anyhow, upon finishing my worksheet, I realized I made a major mistake. I had forgotten to properly imitate Maxxie's handwriting. I had her pencils, hands and, well, everything else to remind me, but I still wrote like I was in my original body. Seeing as how she is an artist, she knew how to use a pen to create things that look nice, and her handwriting reflected that skill. Instead of channeling that and relying on muscle memory... I wrote like Jad.

Disappointed with my work, I began rewriting my answers, trying to mimic the handwriting belonging to the hands I currently possessed. I ultimately succeeded... at least *somewhat*. It looked far too wavy, almost as if I were trying to find a middle ground between cursive and... normal writing. Meanwhile, I could see that Zoe(J) was taking far more detailed notes in my notebook, imitating my flawed penmanship while simultaneously improving upon it. I thought about saying something, but Zoe(J) had his nose buried in his Psychology textbook. Not only was he able to complete his worksheet despite having never taken a Psychology class before, but he was blazing through the book, flipping from page to page.

Distraught and discouraged, I began glancing around the classroom. Looking at the familiar assortment of faces I vaguely recognized, and names I could not recall. Normally I would just glance over them... but I found my eyes drifting towards the butts of those in the front row, admiring them, and feeling... aroused.

I had rarely, if ever, felt aroused. While I did *sometimes* get erections, that was just due to irritation, stimulation, and hormones. Not because I personally found something to be... sexy. As such, I have identified as asexual. My mind was asexual, but this body... definitely wasn't. It felt good to identify something as sexy, but it also felt so very... wrong.

"Hey, Maxxie, are you feeling alright?" Zoe(J) asked me, imitating myself perfectly.

"Huh? No, I'm just dandy, Jad-y. I'm just feeling like a bit of a space today, aight?" I said, trying to act nonchalant and Maxxie-esque, folding my arms behind my head.

After that, I began to shut my eyes and contemplate the relationship between the sexual orientation of the mind and the body. If we assume that the two forces interact with each other to form a comprehensive sexual orientation, then what would happen if the two were switched around.

If an androsexual mind was put into the body of a gynosexual, which sexuality would prevail as the dominant one as the years went on? Would the mind influence the body, or would the body influence the mind? Would a child's mind, if it were placed in another child's body, change their sexuality as they mature? I asked questions, but I had no answers, just blind theories. No solutions, only problems.

Session 14: Can't Even Shine In A Prism



I wasted little time leaving my first period once the bell rang and began rushing halfway across the school to Maxxie's next class, Ceramics. It was hardly as much of an ordeal to traverse the halls than it was during my time in Shiaka's body. But I still felt burdened by both the hefty weight of Maxxie's backpack as it slung on my shoulders, and the lack of vision imposed upon me by my reduced stature. Still, I managed to make it to the classroom in time, where I was caught off guard by how unfamiliar everything was.

I was greeted by a group of students from all four years and a teacher who I did not know by name. This lack of familiarity made it hard for me to get into the mindset I needed to be in to impersonate Maxxie. And as such, I spent most of the period acting like I, Jad Novus, would in a situation like this. I was distant, standoffish, and far from the bustling ball of energy that I assumed Maxxie would be in a class like this. I tried to imitate her speech patterns and vocabulary, but I became less and less convinced in my own performance as the period went on.

As for the class itself, all we did today was look at some clay bowls that were made last week, baked over the weekend, and painted on Monday. Some of them were pretty crappy, lumpy, or had developed cracks in them as they hardened. Maxxie's, however, was *perfect* by comparison. I mean, I am not very well versed with clay craftsmanship and such, but it was very

smooth, its shape was symmetrical on all fronts unlike some of the others, and it was really well painted too.

Okay, just glancing at it you might assume somebody threw violet and teal paint all over it, but the colors were vibrant and gelled well together, while the actual brushwork was very consistent throughout the bowl. It looked pretty cool all things considered, but as I looked over it, I quickly realized that Zoe was the one to paint this bowl. A fact that picked away at my already flaking self-confidence.

You see, Verde, assuming you are still listening, I really never took that many art classes. I was never very good at any field, and while Maxxie tried to get me to at least learn some basics, she is not a very good teacher. I know that anybody can learn how to draw well with enough time and dedication. While I have tried time and time again to draw something half decent, everything I draw with a pen or pencil looks like it was made by a third-grader.

It sucks. It sucks to be around somebody so creative and talented and have no artistic capabilities to call my own. It sucks even more to find somebody else in my circle of friends—one who has never expressed any interest in the creation of art— and see that they are *way better* at art than me.

Third period was creative writing, a class I normally had with Maxxie, meaning I had it with Zoe(J) today. We did not talk to each other or anything, as Zoe(J) is not the sort of person to speak during class unless it is explicitly requested. Instead, we just were given random classmate's short story to critique, and for the writer to edit over the break. They were only two to three pages long, so I went through a couple.

A nifty little story about a world where fifty percent of humans can fly, but only gain the ability if they are in a situation where flight would save their life.

A tale about forced feminization, likely written by somebody who never heard of the term, and whose views of gender norms were a decade out of style.

But I also, *somehow*, was given the story Maxxie wrote for this project. I guess someone screwed up the directions for distributing these things. Anyway, the story took the form of a series of diary entries about an disabled child, Viktor Bitz, who learned of a "blue jam-like substance known as *Krängus*." Which I was 90% sure was just some gibberish she made up. A substance that could be used to relax one's bodily parts, allowing for easy removal, and allowing one to merge body parts together, no matter what part and what species. The story ended with Viktor living the life of an eccentric billionaire woman who lived on an isolated island. With her looking over a group of human animal hybrids she used to populate a zoo of her own creation.

It was a bit light on content, but mostly dark, with some of the descriptions of the creatures were disturbing, such as 'the one known as Gregg.'

“Despite having such a mundane name, this critter was naught but that! Their body was topped with the head of a shaven elk, its face adorned six eyes in total, all from a creature of a different phylum. Its torso was that of a man, a strong one whose fine muscles were obscured by the red feathers poking out from his skin. Its waist was that of a woman, one carrying a child that will, most certainly perish before birth, and whose skin was covered with a reptilian hide. Last were its legs. Tall, thin— extracted from a moose, still coated with a thick fur, making them almost look like a set of pants and shoes, granting the critter a veneer of humanity. A veneer that, much like its name, was not reflected in its behavior as it stomped at the rodents released in its cage, before chewing their limp dying bodies with its metallic teeth.”

I have *no idea* why the English teacher for this class, Raiyne Underwood, allowed Maxxie to write this sort of thing. I mean, yeah, Raiyne did know Maxxie on a decently close level on behalf of her being both my mother’s friend and our English teacher for the past four years. But this still doesn’t seem appropriate for high school.

Meanwhile, I did not have a particularly captivating idea for this project. My story was a simple and well-trodden tale about a man who witnessed a murder and had determined what the right course of action was. If he should run, hide, intervene, call the police, take a photo of the criminal, and so forth. But looking back at it... it was a wordy and elongated story, filled with too much pontification for a decision that, realistically, would be made within thirty seconds.

I tried to offer honest criticism for all of these stories, but I felt it had to be worded as Maxxie would, meaning I had to start emulating her tastes and wording in writing. This meant that I wound up erasing a lot of my comments in favor of an assortment of astronomically awful alliteration and an amazing amount of asinine asides about anything my mind’s manifestation of Maxxie may muster. Unfortunately, my struggle to produce perfectly... screw it. I had trouble keeping up with what Maxxie did so effortlessly despite technically having the same biological brain she normally possessed.

It was a discouraging, demeaning dirge that inspired a sour sense of sorrow to stew within me as I made my way to the final class I had before Lunch, Studio Art.

As I realized when I looked at Maxxie’s notes earlier, Zoe handled the presentation of her project yesterday, standing in for Maxxie, and supposedly doing a bang-up job. She did not say what her project was, but as I looked at the art on display out of the room, I immediately found it. An elaborate art print featuring the characters from the early 90s anime series, *K.O. Beast*.

Back when I first met Maxxie, back in 2003, her favorite thing in the world was this obscure 7-episode anime by the name of *K.O. Beast*. She would watch and rewatch the series pretty much every day after school, and it inspired her to pick up a pen and start drawing anime as well as she could. Without it, she might have never decided to become an artist... at least that’s what she liked to say.

Her parents, Kenneth and Eleanore Flare, realized how much she loved the series and, for her 16th birthday, they purchased the rights to the series, making her the legal owner of the IP. Meaning she not only owned the anime series and the Super Famicom game, but anything she produced related to *K.O. Beast* was *technically* official art.

For a decade, Maxxie viewed *K.O. Beast* as her artistic goal. She wanted to make something that not only looked that good, but looked *exactly* like it. It was why her normal style was 90s anime to the core, and... her hard work certainly paid off. While there were some stylistic differences, and some of the character designs were tweaked, it looked like *K.O. Beast*. And if I didn't know Maxxie, I would be *shocked* that this was done by an 'amateur' 18-year-old high school student. It just goes to show what someone can accomplish with enough time, determination, and professional tutoring...

I was actually a bit upset that she never showed it to me before... but then I realized that she probably was going to show it to me on Saturday. It's just that we got distracted by the whole body swapping affair, so this probably slipped her mind.

After spending enough time gawking at Maxxie's excellent art, I made my way into the classroom. What followed was a series of presentations from about ten or so students, showing off their illustrations, describing their intent, forming a narrative, and asking questions from students and the teacher... but mostly the teacher. Personally, I was taken aback by just how skilled most of these students were. None of them were as good as Maxxie, but I still found this showcase to be... disheartening. Because right now, these students are probably better at art than I ever will be.

With my spirits low, I headed to room 1337 for fifth period and to reconvene with my friends. As I arrived, I saw Maxxie(Z) pushing together four student desks, sliding them across the tile floor instead of lifting them. Because it's not like that causes a screeching noise. Before I could question her actions Maxxie looked at me and immediately dropped what she was in the middle of.

"Gah! You *spooked* me there, *Maxxie!*" Maxxie(Z) shouted.

"Well, maybe I wouldn't spook ya so darn easily if you weren't moving the desks like a dummy. You're a big strong tree man, so try lifting them!" I said with a bit of sass, trying to ease my depression with some Maxxie-isms.

"Well, I guess I should've. But good news! If you check your beg, you'll see that we have a special surprise for lunch. Because Babs bake a bushel of bentos at my behest!" Maxxie(Z) triumphantly declared, standing with her arms on her hips.

I then put down my backpack, and Maxxie(Z) began setting the makeshift desk table, pulling out four Bento boxes that were each individually wrapped in a cloth napkin. Each held an assortment of treats tailored for each one of us, likely as an attempt at showing off the differences we all have in regards to taste.

The violet box with an M sticker on it had two large pork onigiri rolls slightly smooched in the plastic container along with... Look, I am only going through the rest of the story in hopes that you are listening to me, but for fuck's sake, give me a goldarn sign if you are, okay?

...

...

Oh, alright, you changed the surroundings to a pleasant view of the cosmos, nice to see that you can still manipulate this little room-sized pocket dimension... And you removed your chair, which is just lovely. The door is still behind me, and... goodness have I gotten used to saying everything that's on my mind.

However, unless you ask me all proper-like, I'm just going to summarize the actual food part of lunch. After Terra(S) and Zoe(J) arrived, we began digging into the food Babs prepared for us. The portions were small, and Babs knew what we liked, so the actual lunch part breezed by pretty quickly. Much like with dinner on Saturday, I was overwhelmed by how sensitive my palate was, with every bite packing oodles of flavor. Hell, even the white rice managed to have a bit of a kick to it... *somehow*.

However, it was not as pleasant for everyone, namely Zoe(J).

"I've got to say, Jad... I am surprised your taste buds are—"

"So bad? I assumed as much. I never had a good sense of smell, mostly because of how bad my seasonal allergies were as a kid. Which is possibly the reason why foods taste a lot more bland in my body."

"As the current occupant of Zoe Xing," Maxxie(Z) declared, "I would like to posit the theory that dude's just have worse tongues than girls. Because your tongue ain't that better, *Zoe-Zoe*. Furthermore, I hath an addendum to introduce to the board!"

Maxxie then shoveled the rest of her bento into a box and... I keep saying that Zoe's body looks like a salaryman, but what is more 'salaryman' than shoveling food down your throat to get back to work? Not much!

"Aight," Maxxie(Z) began before letting out a belch. "So the other day I was complaining about how I thought that Jad's school life and persona were pretty dang boring. Zoe, you *sex dawg*

you, are way, way, way, worse! I mean, with this bod, this sexy swimmer and track star body you built, I just wanna try blazing a trail through a boy, girl, whatever. I just wanna make *ample* use of the *eight inches* that have been begging for freedom all day long.”

Now would be as good a time as any to clarify that Maxxie is a virgin.

“...Please don’t tell me you—” Zoe(J) muttered.

“I *did* use your ruler to measure your penis,” Maxxie(Z) confessed. “But you probably put soap on your kielbasa before you go to school. So I figured it was kosher for me to go all *touchies* with it after Physics was let out early. Anyway, the glasses, the uniform, and— ahem— the necessity to imitate the vernacular and mannerisms of one who I could reasonably call my opposite on that front. That all makes this shaz a helluva lot *wacker* than I figured it’d be on the Sunday.”

“...You were positively *fuming* when we ran into Yuccot Kikansky.” Zoe(J) said as he logged onto one of the computers in this room.

“*Guh!* Don’t get me started on that AssBlaster82-ass A-hole! That memory is being forwarded onto the *garbage at the dumpster dot com* and will be marked as spam!” Maxxie(Z) shouted.

“Erm, who exactly is Yuccot Kikansky?” The quiet Terra(S) meekly asked from the background.

“We mentioned him before, Terra,” I said. “Really obnoxious super senior who annoys the hell out of everyone and has taken a ‘liking’ to us as of late. Ring a bell?”

“He has also shown himself to be quite an unintelligent, racist, sexist, bigoted, hateful little peach pit of a human being.” Zoe(J) mentioned, his brow furrowed as he spoke.

“On this day he doth declared that Zoe and I were touchin’ peppers, which I don’t mind, I’ll mess with some boys love ish from time to time, watch some dongs going into another man’s bum. But what boiled my broth is how he said we got gay because we were tired of our ‘half-breed whores’... Yes, *really*.” Maxxie(Z) said with scorn.

“Ugh...” Terra(S) moaned.

“As for my time in your body, Jad,” Zoe began, changing the subject, “I felt that it helped me obtain a greater understanding of the differences between people physically. Being a generally smaller and leaner person than I normally am was not much of a jump for me after spending time in both Maxxie’s and Shiaka’s original bodies. However, it was a more than worthwhile decision to spend a day in your form.”

“Okay, but did you, I mean, do you *like* it?” I asked.

"I attempted to dodge the question, but quite frankly, I do not particularly care for your body Jad. I do appreciate the feeling of a trim waistline, but it lacks the sense of strength I am accustomed to. Furthermore, it lacks the feeling of... cuteness that I had recognized after spending time in Maxxie's and Shiaka's bodies."

"Got it Zed, but now comes the question of how my *dear sweet sister* has been enjoying her day as a high school girl."

"Right, so, um, I think I said that I was a bit freaked out by all of this during... second period, right?" Terra(S) murmured as she played with her dark navy skirt.

"Yeah... you feeling alright?" Maxxie(Z) said as she stood up and got closer to her sister.

"I— I guess so, it's just that... I feel like I am... I am trespassing, I am stealing Shiaka's life—even though she let me have this. Every person who sees me as Shiaka, and... It all feels wrong. I keep thinking that everybody at this school, they're all looking at me and seeing through this lie I have built. It is *horrifying*, and I... I felt that I was going to hyperventilate at any given moment and just ruin Shiaka's life because of that." Terra(S) confessed, her blue eyes filled with tears.

Maxxie(Z) rushed over to her sister, ready to comfort her with a hug, only for Terra(S) to jolt to the other side of her seat. She clearly was discomforted by the idea of being hugged by a taller man in a moment like this.

"Hey, Terra, would you feel better if you hugged me?" I asked, seeing as how I was in Maxxie's original body.

Terra gave a nod in response, so I switched seats with Maxxie(Z) and began hugging her sister. She began wetting my pink blazer with tears, but I did not care. I simply held her softly, began slightly rubbing her back, and began humming the song *Miss Stiletto Heels* from *Deadly Premonition*.

It was a call back to a time from four years ago, where the three of us decided to play through that bizarre, busted, yet wonderful game together over spring break. The memories flooding back to her, combined with her sister's original body's delightful voice, were enough to subside Terra(S)'s tears. Once she was ready, she eased out of my grip and looked at me, her face beaming with joy.

"Thanks, Maxxie... I screwed that up, didn't I?" Terra(S) mumbled.

"It's alright Terra, we know what you meant." Maxxie(Z) sighed.

“Not to be rude, but do you feel up to continuing this conversation, or...” Zoe(J) questioned

“I... I like it but it feels weird and not quite what I expected,” Terra continued. “The way long hair feels fluttering down my neck. The way the skirt brushed against my legs, and the... softness to everything, it is something I was worried I’d never get to feel. But I didn’t really expect for the, um, breasts, to be so... big. And then there are the scars on my torso, which *really, really, really* did not help with anything...”

...Yeah, we did not tell Terra much about Shiaka’s troubled past, as it’s pretty dark stuff for a ten-year-old.

Silence encompasses the room as Terra(S) looked to be on the verge of confessing something, only for her to slowly open her lips.

“I’m afraid that everything I want is wrong. I feel that... even if I go through all of this crap with gender transition, that I... I still will not feel like a woman as much as I do now. That it will all be futile, a waste... and I will never be comfortable as myself.” Terra(S) said with sorrow, looking down at her skirt and sweater vest.

Unfortunately, this conversation was halted by the ringing of the familiar chime to move to the next period, and unfortunately, she would need to be alone for the next hour. I wonder if that was for the best though, as she would reconvene with Maxxie(Z) come seventh period, and Zoe(J) come eighth. Part of me was relieved at how I did not need to deal with this, but another part loathed the fact I even had that thought. I felt like I was running away to live a lie...

You know, Verde... Ah screw it.

In case you’re curious, I’m doing this for myself, not for you. I don’t want to repress this crap and have a sense of guilt gnaw at me when I lose these memories, because I doubt you were ever going to let me keep them.

I mean, Verde, you abducted me and put me in an alternate reality... and then wanted to *talk about* it with me? You have the ability to reshape reality and that is what you decide to do with your powers? I guess I always knew that something was up, but... I should have called you out on your massive loads of BS before you abandoned me. And all because I got a bit angry at you? You should have seen the horrors of mankind over the three years you’ve been alive, but one person having an emotional outburst screws with you beyond belief... I just don’t understand...

...I’ll get started on recapping the sixth period then... And sorry for snapping at you again. I’m just... ugh!

Session 15: Maxxie Mit Melancholy



Due to the fact that a period only lasts forty-two minutes, and we were preoccupied with gabbing off and eating food, I was unable to voice my own concerns and worries to my friends. I technically could have. But after Terra(S) yanked the tragedy lever so goldarn hard, my concerns were barely worth noting, or at least that's what I told myself as I prepared for the final half of a mostly pointless school day.

With that in mind, I still tried to pay attention in Consumer Education, or at least as much as I felt I could with Zoe(J) sitting right next to me. For some reason, I was intrigued by how he behaved while in my body. He possessed a level of composure and dignity with even his default sitting stance, the way he focused on the screen. As the second half of a video from yesterday played, he diligently took notes that imitated mine in their penmanship, but were far more detailed and looked better than my usual scribbles.

It was almost like looking at an idealized version of myself while being inside of the body of somebody far more talented than I was...

With my confidence diminishing and spirits subterranean, I made my way to the IRC for my seventh period and first study hall of the day. A time where I would hopefully be able to disassociate myself from reality and deal with some of the issues that were roaming through my head. Instead, I ran into a positively groan-worthy individual.

Standing a few inches shorter than myself at 1.6 meters tall, with 90 kilograms under his belt by age 19, it was the one super senior I knew of at this school, Yuccot Kikansky. His dirty blonde hair was only a centimeter and a half tall. Acne scars covered his face. And while his uniform looked standard, I could see the sweat stains along his armpits... and smell the funk wafting from his person.

Yuccot scowled as he waddled up to me, causing me to let out an irritated sigh. For I knew I would need to humor this man with the best Maxxie impression I could muster in my disgruntled state of mind.

“What is it I can trouble you for, Y-K?” I asked, assuming a dry but energetic tone.

“So, I was walking past the art room and saw that poster you made.” Yuccot said, ignoring my greeting.

“Oh, you mean my *K.O. Beast* art?”

“I can’t believe they let you put up your weeb-ass furry fan art you prolly came all over.” Yuccot replied with subtlety of a Hippo taking a dump.

“Um, wowzers, a couple of problems with what you just said. Deflection numero eins, no kidding, it’s based on a freaking Japanese cartoon series. Of course it’s weeb-ish.. Plus, while it is only a little bit, I am part Japanese, okies? Deflection zwei, seeing as how I have the rights to it, that means it is not *fan art*, and while official art may not be the right term, it is pretty dang *legit*. Deflection drei, ...it’s dumb to ejaculate over your own arts, it would get stained and smell after a while. Why would you think I would do that?”

“Puh-lease, I know you’re into weird-ass sex shit—”

“It’s called pansexuality, it means I am equal opportunity when it comes to the type of person I find to be sexy. Men, women, T-Girls, T-Boys, femboys, butch girls, Intersexers, Futas, whatever, IDGAF and so such humbugers.”

“Oh, so you fuck kids?”

“...No, that is *deeply* wrong. If you’re into Shotacon and Lolicon, I’m cool with that. But child pornography is über destructive, and I want no part in it.”

As I explained that to Yuccot, I realized I made a mistake by using second-person pronouns.

Yuccot, instead of maintaining a conversation, responded to my unintended insinuation that he was into Shotacon and Lolicon by flinging up the table, very limply might I add, and then

shouted at me. The vile words he used struck a chord with me and left me more than a little... shocked by how he said them. While I viewed the words as having little power, he spoke them with hatred and conviction.

Thankfully, before I could respond, a librarian grabbed Yuccot by the ear and began pulling him out of the library. Though I did not see what happened to Yuccot, I knew he would be suspended for at least a few days.

Frazzled from that event, I simply sat there, immersed in my own thoughts, before I felt someone tap my shoulder. I quickly turned around in my chair and was face to face with somebody who, much like Vivi Gaimz and Anita Neukar, I knew, but would not say they were my *friend*. His name is Gem Stone, an odd name for sure, but he was sort of an odd guy. Very relaxed and easygoing, always nice to people, in some cases a bit uncomfortably so, but something about him always seemed... off.

Anyhow, in regards to proportions, being 1.88 meters tall and weighing 76 kilograms, I'd say he resembled Zoe in regards to his basic body type. Except while Zoe was handsome and fit, Gem was cute and... cuddly. He was a cute, tall, Mexican boy with a head of short curly hair, dressed in an indigo shirt and some dark pants.

"You doing alright, Maxxisaurus?"

As Gem asked me, he sat in the seat next to mine, placing his hand on my shoulder as he played with my hair. It was... a quirk of his, but I knew he was ultimately harmless.

"Um, yes, I just wasn't expecting him to explode like that," I said.

"I think he's just misunderstood. He needs to be honest with himself and try to face his problems instead of giving way to bad habits."

"Has, um, has he ever lost it and yelled at you?"

"Yes. I hit him in Freshman year and was sent to the principal's office. It was the third day of school and I was really scared."

"Oh, did you get in trouble for that?"

"Nope! I was sent to see the school social worker. I don't know if you met her. She's a really nice lady. She understands that I don't work the same way as most other people and helps me participate in society!"

As Gem said this, I was reminded of his slight lisp and the fact that he was one of those kids with an Independent Education Plan. Meaning he probably had some sort of developmental disability.

"I met her once, but the school decided I didn't need to see a social worker or any of that shaz," I answered, vaguely remembering something Maxxie told me three years ago. "Erm, anyway, thanks for coming to see me after Yuccot... did his thing, I appreciate it."

"Aw, no problemo, Maxxisaurus! That's what friends are for." Gem said as he leaned in to hug me.

As he clenched me in a hug that was a teensy bit too tight... my heart went *doki-doki*. His big strong arms pressed against my body. His hair tickled my nose, filling my nostrils with the scent of coconuts. And as I felt him press against my breasts, I began to imagine him in my mind's eyes, *naked*. It was an... unwelcome thought that made push Gem away, breaking myself out of this impromptu hug.

"*Agh*— I, sorry about that Gem, it's just that, I— I really was *not* expecting that."

As I said that, I forgot about who I was supposed to be impersonating and how *she* would react to a hug from a man like Gem.

"Oh, right, my bad. I'm most sorry Maxxisaurus. I was told I should not give people hugs without asking, but I thought you could use one." Gem said with his lower lip quivering.

"Um, no, no, I just— it was unexpected, as I said. If you asked me for a hug instead of being so, erm, *spontaneous*, then that's a different story, you delightful little... *dear*."

Rather than continue my botched attempt at Maxxie-isms, I excused myself and headed into the little girl's room. Partially because I needed to escape to some place, and partially because I forgot to pee during lunch.

Upon doing my business I remained in the stall, where I spent the majority of the period asking myself questions about the sexuality of the body and of the mind. I tried to rationalize that it was *natural* for me to feel these things, and I was not *wrong* for having such reactions to people like Gem. This wasn't anything new, as I have pondered my aversion towards sex and nudity frequently over the past few years. I thought nudity and sex were gross. I reached that conclusion long ago. But now... now part of me thought otherwise. Part of me could look at people and find them sexy which was... worrying.

Eventually, the bell rang, I was called to leave the bathroom— restroom— *Guh!* I hate how often I get those two things flipped around! Why do they even *let* you call it the bathroom once you

start attending school? There are no bathrooms at school, but they always are called the bathrooms in casual conversation, *even though they aren't!*

...Um, anyhow, upon hearing the eighth-period bell I left for my final class of the day, that of Adventure Education. A spin-off of your standard P.E. class that focuses on teamwork and group activities over sports or exercise. Activities vary day by day, but today was rock climbing, where a group holds onto a person as they climb to the top, while members rotate their roles. But, I did not know anybody there. Okay, Gem was in this class, but he was on another team, and I had to convince myself not to look at his cute butt... *That man possesses a fine heiny, okay?* ...I am just arguing with myself at this point.

Anyway, I chose not to climb today, and instead simply watched people scale the rocks, using my body and body weight to prevent them from tumbling to a premature death. My teammates and teacher urged me to climb, but they soon realized that 'Maxxie wasn't feeling like herself today.' As I stewed over one final failed performance, I hit the locker rooms again, changed back into my uniform, and ventured to my ninth and final period of the day. Another study hall.

I made my way to the IRC before heading out to Maxxie's locker, grabbed her stuff, put her books away, and moseyed my way back to room 1337. Where I walked in on Terra(S) and Zoe(J), who were already having a conversation of their own.

"—You were placed in a foreign environment that provided far more stimulation than you are accustomed to. It is natural that you would find it unnerving, especially when considering that you are in a foreign body at the moment," Zoe(J) calmly explained.

"Wait, erm, foreign?" Terra(S) asked.

"Not foreign with regard to country. Foreign regarding something being unfamiliar. My apologies. Sometimes I forget that your vernacular is still developing."

"Well, I'm sorry for my... hissy fit earlier today. I was just—"

"Terra, it is perfectly understandable. Quite frankly, I am surprised that Maxxie, Jad, and I have all been adapting to this so well."

"I really do feel that this was helpful, and while this, um, being Shiaka thing is a bit weird, I know... I know that I can become who I truly want to be. I'm starting early enough for all of my dreams to become realities and my fantasies to become non-fiction. I will tell my parents when they are back this Thursday, and I will start my transition before the year's end!" Terra(S) said with the utmost confidence to Zoe(J).

Hearing Terra(S) speak with such enthusiasm was heartwarming... but I just had to use it as ammo against myself. She was an emotional mess a few hours ago. But now, she was

brimming with hope. Meanwhile, I just spent the entire day moping around, feeling like a complete piece of waste, wallowing in my own pit of despair. I didn't even want to talk to them, as I felt there was nothing I could add to their heart-to-heart conversation. Despite this, they approached me.

"Jad, are you feeling alright?" Zoe(J) asked.

"I... I feel as if this whole experience was pretty eye-opening for me. I learned a lot about myself, I feel, and... I'll be sure to have a nice, long report written for you to come tomorrow, don't worry about that. In fact, I'd like to get started on that right now."

I then went over to a nearby computer in this room to begin writing that report on my time as my best friend. As I did so, I overheard Zoe(J) help Terra(S) search for a therapist who specializes in transgender adolescents. From what I heard, their search was fruitful.

Before too much time had passed, the door to room 1337 slammed open, and I heard a familiar tone spoken in a familiar voice.

"Alrighty everybody, I'd say it's time to get going!" Maxxie(Z) said, already wearing her coat.

"...I trust you were let out early?" Zoe(J) asked.

"Yeah dude, I don't play hooky or anything like that. I may be a bit of a punk, but I ain't reppin' that *thuggery*. So, if none of you lot have any objections, let's get geared up and blow this soda stand!"

With that, we all gathered what we needed for the five days off, put on our coats, and promptly walked right out of the front entrance, wishing the security guards an enjoyable break. As I said earlier, they really didn't care. We weren't ne'er-do-wells or anything like that, we were honor roll students who wanted to skip study hall.

Session 16: The Long Walk Home



Once we departed the halls of Oransen High, we all gathered into Maxxie's car, resuming our positions from this morning. We could have done a *partial* swap back, but we wanted to pick up Shiaka(T) first. A moment of quiet settled as Maxxie(Z) began driving out of the school parking lot, only to be disrupted by Terra(S), who started sobbing.

"I... I'm sorry if I've been difficult, but... I just want to thank you all for putting up with me. I know I'm not as strong as you all, but... I'm glad that I tried. That I got to experience what it was like to be a high school girl so soon. It was scary, it was strange, but... I'm so happy I did it. These past few days have been challenging, but I know that, no matter what, this is what I want. That I want to live the rest of my life as a woman. T-Thank you for your generosity. For putting up with me and... accepting me as I'm trying to figure out who I want to be."

I regretted my decision to sit in the passenger's seat, away from her, robbing myself of the opportunity to comfort her. Marking yet another opportunity where I can do nothing to help her. Help someone who... is the closest thing I have to a sibling in this world. Instead, Zoe(J) is the one who comforted her... *again*. He wrapped his arms around her and said to her, "I love you, Terra. We all love you."

I looked on at Maxxie(Z)'s face, and could tell that she wanted nothing more than to switch back to her own body to comfort her sister. But as she listened on... she trusted Zoe(J) to handle it. She knew that she would comfort Terra(S) once they got back home.

As for me... I could not share the same empathy. As I saw Terra's display of sorrow, I thought about how I made everything worse for her. I fucked up her coming out. I was unable to give her the support she needed all day, when I should have been there for her every step of the way, holding her hand. Why? Because I was being selfish. Because I was focusing on my petty little meaningless anxieties instead of helping Shiaka deal with her dysphoria. The more I thought about it, the more I felt the need to disengage. After all, for all my fuck-ups, did I even deserve to help her?

I groaned as I recognized my failures and looked out the window.

It began to snow shortly after we left Oransen High, with small flakes clinging onto the ground, street, and sidewalk, building on top of the mostly melted mounds from a few days prior. The sight was pleasant, emblematic of what was my favorite time of the year. It was cold, but not frigid. Remnants of autumn still resonated through the air. And the snow still held a sense of beauty to it before it transformed into a chore. I possessed a plethora of fond memories about these kinds of days, but the fact I was not happy on one of these few days. Days that seem to grow more and more uncommon with every passing year, it just made my mood all the worse.

What sealed the deal was seeing Maxxie's original body's face staring back at me. With Maxxie being such a spunky and happy-go-lucky person, it was rare to see this upset expression on this face. So the fact that I was looking at such an expression... only added another layer to my mound of depression. I would have mused that the world just did not want me to be happy, but really, it was just me. All of this was my fault. I chose to ignore the wonderful formative experience my friends and I were going on, and lingered on the nebulous and needless. I had every reason to be happy, but... wasn't. I let out a sigh as I dug through these thoughts in my mind once again, and managed to draw a response from Maxxie(Z)

"Jad, you're being awfully quiet. I mean, I may just *not* be used to *not* hearing my voice when driving, but I just want to make sure everything's chill with you."

"I... I guess I'll just be honest," I began. "I *really* do enjoy being you— being in your body, I mean— but it's... I feel like I'm wasting it, that all I'm doing— all I did today— was squander an opportunity. All because I'm not capable enough to handle a day as you. I don't know why, out of the billions of people in this world, Verde decided to give the remote, this VD to somebody as useless as me."

As I finished that sentence, Maxxie pulled over, parked the car, and reached over me to yank the VD out of the glove box. She switched herself and Zoe(J), placing her in my original body, and Zoe back in his original body.

“Guys, guh— do— ahem,” Maxxie(J) said as she cleared her throat. “Sorry about that, new voice. Well, not really, but, um, anyway, you guys go pick up Shiaka, I’ve got to work this shit out *now*. Get out of the car Jad! We’re going on a walk.”

I did as she ordered and stepped out of the car. I breathed in the cold November air as I wondered just how terribly I was handling this situation.

As I sighed, Maxxie(J) hugged me, and I hugged her in return.

“Jad, I am *so, so super sorry* that I did not notice this earlier. You need to let me know if anything is troubling you. Because if you’re bummed, you better believe that *I’m bummed* and will do *everything* and *anything* I can to light your heart up!”

“I... I know that. I’ve always known that. I just feel like I don’t deserve... you.”

Even though she was wearing my original body, I could not bear to look her in the eyes.

“Come walk with me, J-Star. We’ve got some major beef to squash.”

As Maxxie(J) said that, she broke out of the hug and wrapped her arm around my waist

“W— Wait, you want to walk around hugging like this?”

“It’s not really hugging, and besides, who is going to A, see us, and B, care? Just don’t get so worked up about what other people think, it doesn’t matter, and you know this, dude!”

“I know, I’m just... *ellipsis*. I feel like compared to you, Zoe, Shiaka, and even Terra, I’m useless. You are an amazing artist, rightfully have a large following, and are the— You are the most fun person I have ever met, while also being so *amazingly, delightfully weird*. Zoe started with nothing, a dead dad, overworked mother, but through all that, he became an ambitious, professional, and incredibly mature young man. He keeps his cool even when in a goldarn inferno. Shiaka is a technical, smart, and adorable young woman, who went through the *most major shit* I’ve ever heard of. But despite that, she still leads a normal life. While Terra... She is such a brave little girl who is finding herself. She is panicky at times, but she keeps going, because she knows that... if she doesn’t try... nothing will change. Me, I guess I do well enough in school, but without you all, I’m nothing! *I’m fucking nothing!*”

At some point in that tirade, I began to cry, sullyng Maxxie’s face with undeserved tears.

“Trying to *be* you, *act like you do*, it only made me realize how *worthless* I truly am. You’re always smiling even in the face of adversity, and always doing what you want, not caring about what others think of you, it is all admirable and... Guh!”

“Jad, I... I appreciate how highly you think of me, but... that is complete, utter, distilled, *fucking stupid-ass bullshit!*”

Maxxie then stopped in her tracks, grabbed me by my shoulders, and forced me to look into her green eyes.

“You think I would be the same person without you? That Zoe and Shiaka, and even Terra would be the same person without you? I dunno if you recall, but I was a *cunt* before you came along and showed me that *friendship is magic*! Zoe was a bitter and isolated ass— I guess he still is to an extent— but he’d be full, one-hundred percent antisocial if he was left to sulk in the corner and not speak to anybody. Shiaka, *oh my goodness*, you know what one of the reasons why she is able to exist in a social environment? You, ya dummy! You are quiet, shy, and open as all fuck! I’m a loud bitch, and Zoe’s hardly the most friendly face around. Without you, she would have never opened up to anyone outside her family. And Terra, dude, you are basically her big brother! And don’t try to extrapolate something wack about how she saw you as a bad male figure and decided to be trans, or whatever demeaning shit is rattling around in your brain space! That’s absolutely not the case, you... *silly slippery salamander!*”

At this point, Maxxie joined me in the waterworks, tears filling her eyes and pouring down her borrowed face.

“Besides, you act like *you’ve* never had to deal with hardships, you know? I mean, your dad was a total prick with thorns attached. Your parents went through a divorce, your ass was almost beaten open in the process, and you’ve kept your shit straight through the years. All while being the... I am so happy to have you in my life. I know I may not show it a lot of the time, but *I love you Jad*. Fuck, I probably can say the same thing for Shiaka, and definitely for Terra.”

As she said those words, the tears stopped. But before I could comprehend the love she was talking about, she continued her speech.

“You really don’t have *anything* to be ashamed of, you may not be living a dream life, but fuck it, you can change that around. Never give in to despair, I mean, that’s the entire point of *Danganronpa*! Always believe in yourself, your potential that is just waiting to be awoken! Unleash the power of your hope and send that twin-tailed bitch into the furnace where you burn all you stupid and petty anxieties! *Don’t Get Discouraged! Put a Smile on Time! Dark is the Night*, but the day shines just like the sky!”

As she finished our speech, I took a moment to allow her words to sink it... before saying the first thing I could think of.

“Thank you.”

We then embraced one another standing as the snow fell onto us, calming our hearts and cooling our fiery emotions. We then looked at each other, our faces stained with tears, but the crying was over. I looked at her sheepishly, she did the same and then... we brought our lips together, sharing our first 'true' kiss.

After we relished in this moment for five seconds, we both broke out of the hug, looking the other way as we comprehended what we just did. As I was preparing an apology, Maxxie(J) spoke first.

"Hahaha, *wowzers*. I sure as sugar wasn't expecting my first smooch to be with myself. Pretty darn weird if I do say so myself, hehehe."

"Erm, it was a platonic thing, some sort of emotional excess that happens with really good friends and—"

"Dude, it's kissing, this culture just don't like non-romantic smooches, your Deutschland ancestors used to make out with their family members all the time. You can take it however you want though. Either it was a cousinly kiss, or a 'lovey dovey kiss' either way, it's all swell with me."

"I, erm, thank you, but I should say that I was, you know, feeling something down there..." I nervously said while gesturing towards my crotch.

"It's brain chemicals reacting to stimuli from your mind and body, which is a pretty cool can of beans. But if you think about the beans for too long, then the beans will get all cold, moldy and gross so that nobody would want them. So just take a spoon and dig in while you still got a boner or something. ...I dunno. All this emotional talk has gotten me winded, spacey... and a *little horny*."

We then shared a laugh over the awkwardness of our situation. I held out a hand and, without hesitation, Maxxie(J) grabbed it. Hands clenched, we resumed walking towards our homes, looking at the snowflakes delicately falling from the sky. I'm not entirely sure what inspired us to do this, but before I knew it, we were skipping our way to her house, singing a wintry song together.

Verde: *Winter's breeze, brushing on your face.*

Verde: *A cold reminder of our happy place.*

Verde: *As the snow continues to fall, the time is now.*

Verde: *We laugh at the heavens to make a vow.*

Verde: *Through the worst and best, our bonds will last.*

Verde: *It is one way our future shall be like our past.*

Verde: *It is up to us to make sure all is well.*

Verde: *Come, my dear, we mustn't dwell.*

Verde: *...Is that right?*

I... I was not expecting you to come back, Verde.

Verde: *Well, I did promise that I would explain everything to you, Jad, and I'd say your story has ended. ...Oh my, that sounded far more aggressive than I intended, please, forgive me.*

I— okay, before getting into— but then there is the— I thought that—

Verde: *Calm down, Jad. I stopped your story as I do not feel I need to hear how Shiaka(T) had a 'mildly' discomfoting time as she tried to lose herself in the experience of being a school boy. Nor do I need to hear about your pizza and Smash Bros. filled Tuesday night, even if I do enjoy your group's antics.*

...Now that you spawned yourself a chair, can you explain why exactly you left?

Verde: *My experience with people is... minimal, if I may admit my most evident fault. I was intimidated and, as such, I hid. I pondered returning, but I felt that now, after you have calmed down, was the best point to come back. I must thank you for staying with me all this time.*

Oh, well, it was not really a choice to me, no way I was going to *forget* all of this... Even if it did not really happen.

Verde: *It happened, just not anymore. It is an alternate history you have memories of.*

Right, right... So, you said that you would explain everything about... everything.

Verde: *Yes, yes. Being a woman of my word, I shall tell you how everything began, repeating information when necessary for the sake of clarity.*

Session 17: Obtuse Origins - Omega Overdrive



Verde: *So, after almost fifty-two thousand words exchanged between the two of us...*

Seriously?

Verde: *I was surprised myself, but I have been keeping track of the word count. Anyhow, onto the history and backstory I promised I would provide you. Although, I may have hyped things up a little too much.*

Verde: *It all began a... a long time ago. An angry young man, known by the pseudonym of Vincent Dawn, lived in a world very similar to the one you know. For reasons lost to time, he was gifted a great power, the ability to reshape reality and alter the world around him. With such power and a... skewered moral code, Vincent Dawn began abusing their newfound abilities, using them for both his own creative expression and for... what eventually became a fetishization of despair, torture, misery, and so forth.*

Before you continue, Verde, how do you know all this?

Verde: *Vincent Dawn wrote a collection of anecdotes and records of how he used his powers. I would use the term Kafkaesque to describe his attempts at dramatized prose, but I do not feel he deserves such a title. Point is, his creations were hard to read for the most part, and quickly*

degraded into utter nonsense that went on and on. I read through everything, but it was hard to make sense of his madness.

When you say madness, do you mean he was insane?

Verde: *I described his actions as a 'fetishization of despair, torture, misery, and so forth' and I meant it. Vincent Dawn was a sadist. He enjoyed harming others and seeing others harm others. People were little more than playthings, well, aside from one.*

Fair enough... But now I want to know what exactly happened to Vincent Dawn. I mean, you said he died, but how exactly does one kill a person who can change all of reality if he so wishes to?

Verde: *I can answer both questions with a single word. Suicide.*

Oh... Did he grow *bored* with life, feel that he was truly evil and decided to kill himself to make amends, or...

Verde: *It is true that he experienced some boredom, as is inevitable, but the real bringer of his downfall was erectile dysfunction... Vincent Dawn had his own deviant sense of pleasure, and one day he was unable to feel or satiate these desires. This allowed Vincent Dawn to finally stop and think about who he is and what he has been doing with his power, his life, and so forth. He was not happy with the results and deemed himself unworthy of his powers, choosing to pass them on to another.*

Verde: *For whatever reason, Vincent Dawn chose me to succeed him. Me. A newly born being, three years old, named Verde Dusk. And when I came into being, I quickly found Vincent Dawn's suicide note, where he explained his mistakes, his woes, and his triumphs. But most critically, he begged me to not follow his footsteps and to stray far away from the path of madness he traveled.*

Wow, um, he almost sounds like a tragic figure when you put it that way.

Verde: *He was, in a sense. In another, he was a monster. And I tend to favor the latter perspective, as callous though it may be.*

Okay, I think I understand, but I have a few questions. First off... How exactly did Vincent Dawn do the things he did, and... how do you do the things you do?

Verde: *...I wish for it to be, and it is. I can craft worlds, universes, and alter them to my liking, all through the concentrated power of will. I could, in theory, do anything I wish with these grand and limitless abilities of mine. But I instead choose to focus on smaller, more personal alterations wherein I interact with social microcosms involving a few rather than galactic macrocosms that*

involve billions. I want to use my powers well. I want to fend off the madness he warned me of. I do not want to wave my hand and see whatever I wish to see for my own pleasure. I want to help learn about the world one step at a time. ...And I want to help you, Jad Novus

I... I am quite grateful that I have earned your interest, Verde, and that I was able to experience something like this. But, thinking about the big picture, I think that I'm doing just fine. I think I benefited a lot from this experiment, I learned more about things I never really thought about and all that junk. But, ultimately, I think your talents would be better used elsewhere.

Verde: ...

Verde? I'm sorry, did I offend you?

Verde: *Do you think of yourself as a good person?*

Huh?

Verde: *Don't 'huh' me, answer the damn question!*

I don't hurt others, try to be nice and respectful, and would never go out of my way to hurt somebody who has not wronged me or anyone I know.

Verde: *Congrats, you have reached the bare minimum bar to be a decent human being, but are you content with wallowing in the pits of mediocrity for the remainder of your days?*

I just talked about how Maxxie and I—

Verde: *Do you really believe her though? Believe that everything will be okay if you stay in this position, surpassed by everyone you know about? Both Terra and Shiaka are truly not that different from you. I mean, if you really think about it.*

Verde: *Both of them are timid young women who are well on their way of pursuing true happiness. Shiaka has been incredibly strong after she had every reason to slit her own throat. Yet she has blossomed into a lovely person who is getting stronger by the day.*

Verde: *Terra, meanwhile, was a little boy who decided to come out and be honest with their sister, going against the established norms and pursuing her own happiness at such a young age. She did not suppress her desires and let them remain in the back of her brain, like you. You may think that Maxxie helped you find peace in your life, but you know that you still truly, deeply, harbor some sense of hatred for yourself, you just want to avoid it. You are fleeing from your fears. You are pathetic. You are worthless.*

I... no. No, you're right. I... I really am not happy with myself, and I'm not... I am not satisfied with my life.

Verde: *I know there is a lot going inside your head, stuff you don't even consciously know about yet. I can help you, Jad. I want to help you out as best I can. It's just that... I'm not very experienced and don't understand a lot of things. I want to learn more about people, about you, about myself. And I want to help both of us, Jad.*

And you want to do this by sending me into alternate realities and then talking about my experiences there?

Verde: *Yes, is there anything wrong with that?*

It... I guess it acts as a good catalyst for a bizarre six-hour-long therapy session... Ones that are *probably* exponentially more effective than regular therapy

Verde: ...

Verde... You're not going to flip out again, are you?

Verde: *Oh, so you, erm, oh my goodness. I was honestly not expecting this to work out that well... Are you interested in continuing these sessions, about once a month or so, while trying to better yourself in the intervening time?*

I— Sure, I guess. But, hold up, will I remember what happened or-

Verde: *You will remember everything when you wake up in your bed on the morning of November 22, 2014. You could tell your friends about your dream wherein you went to an alternate dimension and spoke to the queen of reality about what you just saw... but that might not be the best idea.*

That... is a pretty good point. So, do I just go out the door, or...

Verde: *Yes, you will wake up as if nothing ever happened, but you will remember everything.*

Oh, okay, erm, right, thank you very much, Verde.

Verde: *'Not a problem,' Jad Novus, I'll catch you come December.*

Okay then... see you next time, Verde Dusk!

Verde: ...

Verde: ...

Verde: *Well, that went better than I anticipated. True, my expectations were set intentionally low, but I finished my first session with Jad Novus. I just hope I can truly help him this time... Verde, no, that part of your life is behind you, and it should not be dwelt upon. Feel no despair, no frustration, no self-loathing. You can and will do this, for Jad Novus and for yourself. "You are Verde Dusk, you can handle anything." Isn't that right, Vincent Dawn?*

Verde: ...*Yes Verde, you are thinking out loud again. Oh, dearie.*

Das Ende

Afterword: Natalie Rambles About Verde's Doohickey

The following afterword was originally posted on Natalie.TF on March 25, 2020 as a post-mortem of *Verde's Doohickey* to celebrate its 2020 re-release on Natalie.TF. It was updated in September 2022 after the release of *Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra*.



First of all, I would like to thank you for reading, or at least flipping through, *Verde's Doohickey*. And now, I would like to discuss it in detail. Going over its origins, my inspirations, my intentions, and my overall thoughts on what was my first full-fledged novel, after having revisited it in its entirety. So without further ado, let's dive into *Verde's Doohickey*.

Part 1: Birthing Novus

...Or at least that's what I would say, if not for the fact that *Verde's Doohickey* very much was not my first attempt at writing fiction, let alone long-form fiction. In fact, it was created as a direct response to my earlier work. Now, discussions and explanations about my 'earlier work' are robust enough to warrant their own Ramble, so I'll instead regale you with an abridged version.

A few months after I started Natalie.TF back in 2012, I began to write novellas by the name of *Intertoids* and *Nari's Log*. A pair of two genuinely bizarre strings of consciousness that barely

made any goldarn sense. However, they helped me develop a foundation as a writer of creative fiction. This eventually caused my ambitions to boil in order to give way to a number of novellas that I wrote throughout 2013 and 2014. *Raiyne's Whimsy*, *My Life as Abigale Quinlan*, *Punky's Post-Apocalyptic Adventure*, *Terrance & Urabe's Alien Assassination Adventure*, *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNApocalypse*, *Psycho Shatter* (95YcH0_Sh4πeR), and *A Vile Doohickey*.

I have something of a love-hate relationship with these novellas. They all served as a major leap for me creatively, with the production of each one imparting on me a number of lessons as a creator. Without them, I would not have whatever facsimile of skills I currently have as a writer. However, I am neither happy nor proud of these stories. Their writing was sloppy, rushed, and generally low quality. Their concepts and structure were flawed. And there was a lot of unsavory stuff in them that I would not necessarily include in my work nowadays.

I originally took these stories down for a few years, but I restored or re-uploaded them on my website, Natalie.TF, back in May 2022. You can find them if you are curious, but I would like to stress that they are *quite bad*, and I have not read them in their entirety since 2018. Alternatively, if you are curious about what these stories were about, I would recommend reading my 2019 novel, [The Saga of Vincent Dawn](#).

Pedantics aside, there are two titles that are of particular importance when discussing *Verde's Doohickey*, as they directly influenced its premise and objective. *Psycho Shatter* (95YcH0_Sh4πeR) and the similarly named *A Vile Doohickey*.

Psycho Shatter (95YcH0_Sh4πeR) was a crass, vulgar tale, forged as a means of venting out the frustrations I was going through back in 2014, both personally and as a creator. It was me taking every nasty, cruel, and mean spirited idea I could muster and funneling them into a story about a cannibal rapist who was given divine powers. It's a story that I genuinely love in spite of its problems, as evidenced by the fact that, in 2019, I wrote an expanded remake of the novella dubbed [Psycho Shatter 1985: Black Vice Re:Birth](#),

After I finished writing *Psycho Shatter* (95YcH0_Sh4πeR), I was thirsty to quench my palette with something completely different— an *antithesis* if you will. To do this, I drew heavy inspiration from the visual novel [Press-Switch](#). A title that I have discussed at length on Natalie.TF in the past, and one of my favorite pieces of fiction of all time. I discovered it back in the summer of 2014, fell in love with it, and found its core premise of a gaggle of teenagers getting up to mischief with a remote that can swap bodies to be *infectious*. So, in fall of 2014, I began production on *A Vile Doohickey*. A novel that centered around a group of four friends, Jad Spencer, Maxxie Flare, Zoe Xing, and Shiaka Kurosawa, who find a body swap remote and use it to have some chill body swapping funsies.

However, the 'funsies' only lasted for the first half of the novella. The second half of the novella was an indicator that I had *no idea* what the hell I was doing with this story. As it veered into this

domestic abuse revenge story that involved body-swap-based framing, and concluded in an erotic shower scene where Jad and Maxxie swapped bodies and had wet, hot, steamy intercourse. Not because it made sense narratively, but because I wanted to try my hand at writing a sex scene. It was a rough impulsively written novella and one that I began having second thoughts about almost immediately after I released it on December 21st, 2014.

At the time, I was happy with what I came up with, but I felt that I was not maximizing the potential of what I thought was a captivating story concept. So, before the end of 2014, I was already penning the outline, ideas, and concept that would make up a remake so expanded, revised, and disconnected that I consider it to be its own unique and distinct entity. An entity that originally went by the title of *Project VDR* before being dubbed *Verde's Doohickey*.

I spent over two months on pre-production for this story, refining the characters, revising the plotline, creating supplemental information regarding every character. I created family trees, assigned heights, weights, birthdates, and school schedules for these characters— Everything I could think of to create a solid foundation for a story. I went through at least 4 major rewrites of the overall outline before finally beginning production in earnest in March 2015. At that point, I was convinced that the bushel of ideas I revised and reiterated upon was *solid gold*. So solid, so *thick*, and so *precious*, that this story could be the introductory point for a series that I dubbed *The Novus Logs*. A series of what I envisioned being 10 novels— *a full decalogy*— that all played a part in this grandiose narrative about self-discovery, friendship, and determination.

I aimed for the stars, channeled every idea I could into the story, and pushed my writing to a new level in order to bring *Verde's Doohickey* to life in the best way I possibly could. ...And the end result is *not very good*. I don't think it's *bad* either, but it has a lot of problems that I became *painfully aware* of as I re-experienced everything this story had to offer.

Part 2: Plentiful Problems in the Plump Pulsating Plot



The modus operandi of *Verde's Doohickey* was to create a 'wholesome' body swap story centering around a group of close friends. A body swap story that did not have any core central conflict. There would be no body theft, no malicious intents, and no issues involving a missing or stolen body swapping device. It was meant to be a more mellow and chill story laced with awkward encounters, momentary shenanigans, and interpersonal reflections. All as the cast get to know each other on the most intimate level imaginable.

It was, at the end of the day, a story about a bunch of teenagers hanging out and having a good time. And in that respect, I'd say that I succeeded, as there is a lot of casual conversation between the main four, a lot of mostly aimless banter, and a good amount of discussions about each other's bodies.

However, there is a reason why narrative structure is so often built around a central conflict with an ensuing climax. That's because it is difficult to make a long-form narrative compelling or endearing without having a problem that the characters are attempting to resolve. It is why *A Vile Doohickey* wildly changed its story focus during its latter chapters— Because I felt that I needed to introduce a conflict and raise the metaphorical stakes near the end.

I realized that in order to make *Verde's Doohickey* work as a story, it still needed some conflict. As such, I decided to give the protagonist, Jad Novus, a hefty dose of *internal* conflicts. He has inferiority and self-esteem issues, a bad habit of comparing himself to others, and underestimates both himself and his own abilities. He sees only the flaws in himself and only the strengths of others. And as he is forced to examine who 'he' is as he keeps swapping bodies with his friends, he reaches the conclusion that he is not a good person.

The climax of the story is ultimately about Jad coming to terms with these things, realizing that he, at least to some extent, loathes himself. Only for Maxxie to remind him that he does matter, he is important, he is loved, he deserves to be loved, and he should not wallow alone in his pool of self-pity.

This was meant to be a major theme of *The Novus Logs*, this 10-part series. Jad was going to come to terms with themselves, learn to love who they are, and grow up from a teenager to an adult with an ample amount of experience under their belt. Or in other words, this was meant to be an exceptionally long journey for this unexpected protagonist. And in order to accommodate the length of this journey, I opted to treat much of this story as an establishing chapter, setting up the core characters, themes, ideas, and setting. The problem with this approach is that, while set-up is all well and good, it is only worthwhile if it leads to something. Which, due to its status as the first volume of a prolonged saga, doesn't happen in *Verde's Doohickey*.

It is obsessed with laying out a foundation, introducing dribs and drabs, name dropping and affording single scenes to characters. Characters like Babs Pequot, Caroline Steticks, Bryce Novus, Haruki Kurokawa, Vivi Gaimz, Anita Neukar, Gem Stone, and Yuccot Kikansky. But it does not *do* anything meaningful with these characters, and most of them are just... *there*. I tried to give them some working personalities, and make them distinct from one another, but they ultimately exist as vague mechanisms in the machine that is the underlying narrative, never developing, expanding, or feeling like fully defined people.

Why did I even include these characters then? Because I had *plans*. I had this grandiose keikaku that I was desperate to make into a reality. I was going to give each of these characters their moment to shine in a later novel, where they would serve as main characters and be afforded a greater level of depth and complexity. However, that is no excuse for including this many ancillary characters in a story this brief and light.

This is a grievance that I have with this story, but not a major detractor, especially not when in the midst of reading the story. Instead, I think the biggest problem with the story is the fact that the story runs out of steam during its final fourth. Where the narrative devolves into a series of bitching and moaning from Jad Novus as they go on and on about how unhappy they are. Their self-loathing is justified, at least somewhat, by their demeanor and the events they are thrust into. But it is not very entertaining to read. If anything, it reads like the writer (me) was frustrated with the concept and just did not know what they were doing... which is at least somewhat true. All until the story ends with a positive note of self-love and a convoluted backstory involving Verde Dusk that, itself, was more set-up for things to come. Actually, not even that, because a lot of what Verde told Jad was actually a lie. If you want to know her actual backstory, read *The Saga of Vincent Dawn*.

Everything about this novel made sense to me while writing it and when viewing my ideas on an outline. But, re-reading it now so many years divorced from the actual script, it comes across as

a clunky story written without a clear and concise purpose beyond featuring characters and vague concepts. It has a lot of *ideas*, has a lot of *heart* put into it, but as a *novel*, and as a *story*, I do not think that *Verde's Doohickey* is particularly good. But I also do not think it is bad. It has shortcomings aplenty and is so clunkily written that I felt the need to re-edit it thrice. Yet, aside from being boring or aimless at points, nothing about it hit me as being genuinely bad or terrible— just underdeveloped and weak.

This is actually a considerable improvement for me, as I would consider just about everything I wrote before *Verde's Doohickey* to be *genuinely bad*. From bad plots, bad pacing, bad characters, or a deluge of nonsense that is so impenetrable that even I, the writer of these works, struggle to understand what the hell I was thinking when I first wrote these stories. *Verde's Doohickey* was me calming down, mellowing out, and trying to tell a fairly serious story for once, with planning and foresight. And it still remains a story that I am proud of. Precisely because I *know* the effort I put into it. I have the working documents, the outlines, the discarded chapters. I remember being thrilled by the story once I finished it, and... I put so much of myself into this story that, from a certain perspective, it's just a mirror.

Part 3: My Characters;Myself

This will sound *disgustingly egotistical*, but every major character in *Verde's Doohickey* was envisioned as an exaggerated extension of one of my personality traits, or sides of my personality. All blown up until they began resembling their own distinct entity. I did this because I had, and still have, difficulties writing characters who are *structurally* different from me. So I figured it would be best to play things safe, and develop each character off of something I could relate to on some deeper level.



Or in the case of Jad Novus, I *did not even bother* creating a new and original character. Instead, I just made him a self-insert. He's a teenager with asexual quirks, anxieties, autism (it's implied, but... it's there), limited social skills, a fondness for video games, and a love of weeb trash. But also a distinctly un-subtle case of gender dysphoria that they themselves are not even aware of, despite being constantly prodded with hints and clues. All of which were apt descriptions of me around the time I was writing *Verde's Doohickey*. *Actually*, If you read both *Verde's Doohickey* and [Natalie Rambles About Being Trans. Autistic. and Weird](#), I think you will find that the overlap between Jad Novus and myself is excessive, obvious, and blatant.

Now, I did not do this as some sort of deeply seated wish-fulfillment, I did it to give me as good a basis as possible in writing this character. A way for me to give him depth and details without breaking away at his core identity, as I knew his identity on an intimate level. However, this also begs the question of which of my traits are not part of Jad Novus, and which of his traits are not part of myself. That is a very complicated question for me to answer. Though the short answer is that he is a simplified and vanilla rendition of myself, gender dysphoria and all, with my spicier personality traits having been given to Maxxie, Zoe, and Shiaka.

Now, because Jad has gender dysphoria— and my goodness is that blatant— you might be wondering whether Jad is trans. The answer to that query is yes, Jad Novus is indeed a trans woman. However, in *Verde's Doohickey*, and its sequel, [The Malice of Abigale Quinlan](#), Jad does not consciously identify as female, they identify as male, and they consider themselves to be a man. They have not yet come to terms with their dysphoria and accepted it, and in the context of these two stories, they would be confused if anybody were to refer to them using female pronouns or terminology.

This is something of a ‘phase’ that a lot of trans people go through, where they, on some deeper level, *know* they are trans. Yet they do not admit it or acknowledge their dysphoria until it becomes overbearing and starts negatively impacting their mental wellbeing. And while it is best to refer to trans people as their preferred gender retroactively, I do believe that it can be appropriate to refer to a trans woman *character* as male when referring to them in past contexts.

Because, in the context and confines of these stories, Jad is what they identify as, and they identify as male. They do identify as female near the end of my 2022 novel [The Dominance of Abigale Quinlan](#)— the sequel to *Verde’s Doohickey* and *The Malice of Abigale Quinlan*. A novel where she not only accepts that she is a woman, but also adopts the name Jade Novus, and is seen by all characters as a woman. ...But when talking about *Verde’s Doohickey*, I view the character as Jad and I refer to them as a boy/man/male.

Trans-tangent aside, Jad Novus was originally known as Jad Spencer, a sort of blank-slate cis-white-male light-novel-ass protagonist who was introduced in *My Life as Abigale Quinlan*. There, he was presented as an everyman who the reader could relate to as he is thrust into bizarre otherworldly situations. He was, again, based partially off of myself at the time, being a bit awkward and reluctant to indulge in sexual activities, despite swapping bodies with a female character. But his personality was chiefly driven by a sense of panic and a love for his friends above all else.

This character later went on to play a minor role in both *Terrance & Urabe’s Alien Assassination Adventure* and *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNApocalypse*. However, they would later be revised for *A Vile Doohickey*, where he served as the protagonist. In this rendition, Jad Spencer was not autistic, asexual, or trans, and was not as awkward as his successor would be. He still had reservations about lewd activities, but that didn’t stop him from ending the story with some good old steamy body swapped shower sex.

While he served his role well in the stories I placed him in, I felt that Jad Spencer was lacking overall. In order to give him more depth I drew from within and wound up turning him into something of a reflection of myself. I felt this approach would make for a more compelling and well-rounded protagonist who would have the personality and depth to warrant his role throughout what I originally envisioned to be a 10-part series.

A less detailed protagonist would feel hollow at the end of such a saga. While a protagonist whom I personally could not relate to would lack the emotional depth demanded by a story like this. Also, it’s *way easier* to write a character whose default voice is your default voice. Because then it is not even character writing. It’s just role-playing as yourself.

Oh, and I probably should explain the name Jad Novus while I’m discussing the origins of his character. The original name, Jad Spencer, was based on the name of the protagonist from the NES game *Bionic Commando*, Rad Spencer, and a prolific anime voice actress named Jad Saxton. When devising names back in 2013, I mingled these two factoids into a single moniker,

Jad Spencer, because I thought it sounded ‘neat’. For the record, my naming conventions were utterly bizarre back then, so this was nothing out of the ordinary for me.

Now, you could be asking why I decided to name a male character Jad, and the answer is simple. I thought it was a unisex name. I thought that Jad and Jade were different names. I assumed that Jad was supposed to be pronounced like bad, dad, lad, rad, or sad. Jad actually is a male name in certain Arabic cultures, but as it stands, it is an odd name for this character. An odd name that... I have a certain fondness for. It’s different, distinct, but easy to wrap one’s head around, as it is monosyllabic and easy to pronounce.

As for why I went with the full name Jad Novus, the answer is also simple. I wanted him to have a last name that began with an N, and the surname that spoke out to me the most was the Latin word for new, Novus. This means that Jad Novus is, quite literally, *the new Jad*. Similarly, *The Novus Logs* are The New Logs. Also, it’s pronounced as No-vus, not No-voose or any other permutation. I know that No-voose is the proper Latin pronunciation, but I’m a midwestern American, and I pronounce most things like a midwestern American. Even with my last name, Neumann, I pronounce it as New-man, and not the proper Germanic Noy-man or Noy-min.



Going through the rest of the cast, Maxxisaurus Omega Flare is actually one of the first characters I ever created, having gotten her start back in *Nari's Logs*. There, she served as a hyperactive and zany partner to the protagonist, often rambling about nothing, getting distracted by stray thoughts bouncing throughout her mind, and having very overt sexual urges. She was a fun character to write given the fact that I could make her say or do just about anything silly and it would be in-character. However, her character was a bit too extreme in its original rendition, so I wound up toning down her crazy levels significantly when I later repurposed her in later works.

Including *My Life as Abigale Quinlan*, *Punky's Post-Apocalyptic Adventure*, *Terrance & Urabe's Alien Assassination Adventure*, and *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNApocalypse*.

Needless to say, I was rather fond of this little oddball. But in those aforementioned four novellas, she only ever adopted the role of a supportive friend and one who was seldom given the opportunity to flesh herself out more than the paltry status of 'friend'. It was not until *A Vile Doohickey* that I revisited her original characterization in earnest. In doing so, I drew inspiration from my creative tendencies, admiration of the modern breed of internet fetish artists, particularly TG artists, and the character Misaki Kamiigusa from *The Pet Girl of Sakurasou*.

The version of her in *A Vile Doohickey* could generally be described as a rough draft of the character she evolved into when it came time to write *Verde's Doohickey*. I envisioned her as being a sort of idealized friend for Jad Novus, somebody outgoing, upbeat, and bursting with energy. Somebody to [light his heart up](#). Somebody to [be his friend and be his side](#). Somebody who represented a sense of kindness, goodness, and affection that would never falter, and would shout valiantly against any opposition, for her body resonates with the burning determination of a star.

My internal inspirations came from my own sillier side, the tangents I went in from time to time, the creative tendencies I established after having written 7 novellas. But more than anything else, she was a character born from my desires and preferences. She is the sort of person who I personally always wanted as a friend, always wanted to know, and always wanted to be a sort of companion of mine.

She was, in cynical terms, a wish-fulfillment waifu whose every detail was catered to my personal desires and preferences. And it is precise because of that, because of all these things, that I love her so much. I love the design I made for her, I love her personality, I love her dialogue, I love everything about her. And while I will openly admit that I screwed up a lot of things in this novel, the character of Maxxie is solid gold in my book.

Her name comes from the insanely long-running podcast, [The Comedy Button](#), which I have been an avid listener of since it debuted in 2011. In the first episode, one of the main cast members, Max Scoville, made a joke that his name was short for Maxxisaurus. That name stuck with me, so I repurposed it for *Nari's Logs* for the character Max and his female counterpart Maxxi. Characters who I eventually gave the surname Flare, reflecting their fiery and bombastic personality.

In the following permutations, I changed their name to Maxxie because... I felt like it. When it came time to repurpose the character again for *A Vile Doohickey*, I gave her the middle name of Omega because... it sounded cool. Which, as a side note, is the best reason to do anything ever. Because it sounded cool.

ZOE XING



Zoe Xing is a character whose role was less prominent than I recalled it being in *Verde's Doohickey*. He's regularly a component of key scenes, but he contributes little to the ensuing storyline, and mostly serves a supportive role to the more vibrant and emotional members of the cast. In a sense, that was intentional and reflects the character I envisioned him as. A calm, mature, and determined young man who approaches matters methodically and professionally,, and is largely divorced from his overly emotional peers. He is a character who was meant to reflect off of Maxxie's bombastic charisma, Jad's self-doubt, and Shiaka's lacking confidence by being somebody who at least *appears* to have everything under control.

Much like Maxxie, Zoe was featured as a supporting character in *My Life as Abigale Quinlan*, *Punky's Post-Apocalyptic Adventure*, *Terrance & Urabe's Alien Assassination Adventure*, and *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNaocalypse*. But his most defining characterization was his role as a controlling businessman who lost his way in *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNaocalypse* which was some wet hot shit.

Instead, it would be best to say that the basis of his character was first actualized in *A Vile Doohickey*. There he was a model student type character who approached problems more analytically, had a strong moral compass, and had some curious tendencies. Traits he demonstrated by how he was to beat a woman in order to frame her husband... for justice.

He was always meant to be a clean-cut character with a darker layer to him. However, the full extent of his character and character flaws were not explored in *Verde's Doohickey*. Instead, his character functions similarly to zucchini in vegetable soup, adding volume and substance to conversations and the proceedings, but providing little in the way of flavor. While more detail could have been afforded to him, the story is not really about him or his development, as demonstrated by the fact that he does not appear until about a third thought.

His characterization originates partially as a foil to Maxxie's charisma and juvenile nature by being a stoic and mature figure. But the core conceit and idea behind his character come from my time in middle school and high school. Back then I was a very diligent student who would often project a very cold and off-putting demeanor while in the classroom. I positioned myself as somebody above all the tomfoolery, horsing around, and miscellaneous lollygagging that my peers indulged in. Zoe Xing is based on the character I was projecting at the time and based on what I internalized as an *idealized student*. He is someone who treats school like a job and does not indulge in the social ongoing.

Zoe's name, not unlike Jad's, comes from my assumption that a female name was a unisex name, and that it was pronounced differently than it actually was. The name Zoe comes from [Zoe Crockett](#), a prolific TG artist who I *egregiously* assumed was male for several years. I assumed it was a male variant of Zoey that was pronounced similarly to doe, Joe, Moe, no, or so. I paired this with the surname Xing because... I thought the name Zoe Xing sounded cool.



Shiaka Kurokawa was a character introduced in *A Vile Doohickey* primarily as a means of balancing the cast of Jad, Maxxie, and Zoe with another female character. With the primary role of facilitating two sets of male/female body swaps. What I came up with was a character who was very underdeveloped in her initial appearance, being a young woman who was reluctant to the idea of being inside a male body due to unspecified anxieties. She was quiet, demure, but ultimately a flat character who in turn was revised in *Verde's Doohickey*, where I *doubled down* on her traits and gave her a backstory rife with abuse and neglect.

Shiaka is a character whose life was defined by tragedy, from being ignored by her parents, being bullied at school, and eventually being horribly assaulted, with her body still being

drenched in unseen scars. She was broken physically and mentally, but through time, love, and determination, she was able to get to a state where she can re-enter society and is bordering on being a fully functional person again. Her story is meant to be one of optimism, perseverance, and the fact that no matter the tragedy, things can get better, hope should never be discarded, and despair should be rejected.

Her demeanor and central theme were heavily inspired by the *Danganronpa* characters Chiaki Nanami and Chihiro Fujisaki. Both of whom are very sweet young people who would never harm a fly but are placed in unenviable situations where they were subjected to horrific abuse and tragedy. I took assorted traits from these characters and colored them with my own social anxieties, making Shiaka the sort of person who struggles with new experiences, new people, and conversations in general. I envisioned her as the character that many people, outside of school and family members, saw me as. Somebody fragile, scared, and unable to exist in society by themselves. Most of which still remains true, but I've gotten significantly better at social interactions as I've gotten older.

Because I was taking my existing traits, and making them more extreme, I felt the need to justify *why* she would be this way. So I decided to repurpose a memorable daydream I had when walking home from school one day in middle school. In the daydream, I imagined some kids knocking me in the head with a brick, tying me up in a school restroom after hours, and mutilating me before freeing and leaving me to die. What can I say? I was a pretty morbid 13-year-old.

Now, this is all well and good, except for one teensy little detail. Shiaka barely does anything in *Verde's Doohickey*. She talks about her anxieties, Jad talks about her backstory, but right when she is about to blossom into more of a character. She is removed from the story during the final stretch, where her role as the fragile little flower of the group is fulfilled by Terra. I did not carve out enough space for Shiaka to undergo any significant development, or for her to serve as a true supporting figure in the story. Instead, she mostly functions as a vessel for Jad to occupy during the first day of school, and a figure for him to admire while doing so.

As part of the September 2022 revision, I added a bonus scene where Shiaka confronted Terra about switching bodies in Session 07: All The Warriors. This was a suggestion by one of my readers, Chari Shalo, and while its implementation is not the most organic, it does address a problem, at least partially. It adds some pathos and character to Shiaka, allowing her to show off her braver side and how she is willing to place herself in uncomfortable situations as a means of growth.

That's the gist on her character and role in the story, but I also feel the need to address her... *unusual appearance*. Shiaka is a short blonde-haired, blue-eyed, half-Hispanic, and half-Japanese young woman with large breasts. This is because there were a lot of visual quirks I wanted to see represented in the original cast of *A Vile Doohickey*. Seeing as how Shiaka was the newest of these characters and did not have a pre-established appearance, I decided to

lump all of these physical attributes onto her. This amounted to *nothing* in *A Vile Doohickey*, but informed her character in *Verde's Doohickey*. To the extent that I consider the natural blonde hair and blue eyes to be an intrinsic part of her character.

As for her namesake, Shiaka is just a modification of the name Chiaki Nanami from *Danganronpa 2*. I ditched the C for an S because I have a speech impediment that makes it difficult for me to say the Ch sound, and trading in the “aki” for “aka” because I liked how it sounded. I then went with the surname Kurokawa because it sounded cool (notice a theme yet?) and had a nice cadence to it. Shi-a-ka Ku-ro-ka-wa!



Terra Flare only exists in *Verde's Doohickey* for two reasons: I wanted there to be another trans character in the story, and found the idea of a young child with gender dysphoria to be a novel concept. She exists to reflect my own burgeoning sense of gender dysphoria that I was dealing with as I wrote this novel and symbolically serves as inspiration for Jad to eventually realize that they are transgender.

Throughout the entire story, there is very little characterization for her aside from being trans and being anxious because she is trans. She starts as a character who comes out as trans and ends as a character who confirms to herself that she is really trans. There is a *sort* of arc there, and some drama about her second-guessing herself after being in Shiaka's body for a while, but her entire character is a touch... unnecessary.

I do think that she does capture the anxieties and nebulous feelings of somebody who was early on in their gender transition rather well. Beyond that? Well, if I were to rewrite this story, I would consider cutting her out of the story entirely to lend more credence and attention to the rest of the already overly large cast.

Oh, and as one could probably put together, her name is repurposed from the protagonist of *Return of Mighty Terra 2052 - The DNApocalypse*, because despite not liking that novella, at all, I am especially fond of the name Terra.



Verde Dusk... is such a complicated and convoluted character that I am not even going to try to discuss her entire characterization here, as it would take several paragraphs to explain her backstory, origins, or anything of the sort. What I will explain is how she fits into the theme of characters being extensions of myself. Jad is me in its purest and most direct form. Maxxie is my creative and quirky self. Zoe is my cold and stoic self. Shiaka is my timid and reclusive self. And Terra is my... dysphoric self, if that makes any sense. But what does that make Verde?

Verde is the central god figure of the wild and sprawling universe that is [The Saga of Dawn and Dusk](#). She is the one who created and initiated *Verde's Doohickey*. She is a pastiche for the author, for me. She is not a self-insert, she is an *author surrogate*, trying to take characters, concepts, and settings in order to create compelling Scenarios. She is indirectly writing and initiating the events of *Verde's Doohickey* and using them to send Jad Novus on an adventure because she likes doing that. Because it is fulfilling to her. Just like how I am writing these stories for my own self-fulfillment. Jad is Natalie Neumann as a person, and Verde is Natalie Neumann as a writer. And I'm not sure if that's some sort of brilliant avant-garde concept that I accidentally stumbled onto or a new incestuous low of self-insertion. But either way, I did it! / *fucking did it!*

...Okay, but why did I decide to even include Verde as a character? I mean, the entire framing device with her interviewing Jad... What the hell was that about? Well, the answer is both frustratingly complicated and incredibly simple. And to start with the simple answer first, it's

because I *needed* somebody to hit me upside the head with a newspaper and tell me to stop during the conceptual stage of this project.

Part 4: My Ethereal Fiefdom for an Editor/Audience

So, one of my most deplorable quirks as a writer from 2013 to 2016 was my *obsession* with framing devices. If I was telling a story, I needed some mechanism to explain how the story was being told in-universe, I needed the story to be told by a *narrator*. Whether it be the protagonist recollecting the events they underwent between each chapter. An unseen narrator who is only acknowledged at the very end of the story. Or a persistent narrator who does not shut the fuck up about anything, *ever*.

With *Verde's Doohickey*, I found myself fascinated with the idea of alternate reality therapy as a framing device. Where one character is sent into an alternate reality, does some stuff, and then discusses this experience with another person, describing what happened and their thought process. I thought this idea was bloody *brilliant*, and while I will admit it is an *intriguing* concept... My execution here was shit.

I think I did a genuinely good job with the dialogue between Jad and Verde, that I delivered conversations that were rich with characterization and exposition while still flowing quite well. But this is another layer in a story that already lacks the room to develop or explore all of its characters in detail. And furthermore, for whatever benefits and boons the framing device adds, it loses a lot by being discarded 75% of the way through. Now, I justified this at the time by saying that, if Jad is going through this instance of self-loathing, then he *should* be alone.

I thought that, at this point in the story, Jad should become cold, irritable, and generally hostile to Verde. When exposed to this hostility, I imagined that Verde would become frightened, overwhelmed, and choose to eject herself from this conversation. Because she is kind of incompetent at the whole therapy thing due to... *various reasons* that I detailed in my 2019 novel, [*The Saga of Vincent Dawn*](#).

A lot of the issues with Verde's Doohickey stem from how this or that 'made sense to me at the time I was originally writing it.' However, every time I go back to it, I find more and more mistakes. More things that simply *do not work*.

One of the worst things about being a creator is not knowing if what I am making or working on is actually good. If I missed something obvious. If I became too obsessed with certain concepts that it proved detrimental to the overall product.

This is something that I know a lot of individual creators deal with, but just about every one of them that I know has some degree of reassurance that their work is of a certain quality. They

have an *audience* who will let them know if they made something good or bad, who will criticize and allow the creator to grow. And I don't really have that on.

I don't have an editor looking over my work. I don't have dozens of commentators pointing out my numerous mistakes. And I hate that. I hate that I do not have somebody telling me if what I'm doing is good or bad. Because I know *my opinion is not reliable*. I know my thoughts on my own work change over time. I look back at things that I did that I thought were great and consider them to be *absolute shit* now. And I would not be doing that if I had... *5 people* in the comments talking about my posts, telling me when I fucked up. Because I have fucked up, I will fuck up, and I don't catch myself when I do fuck up.

Now, this is my fault for creating my own website, not delivering my content through an established ecosystem, and choosing to write stuff instead of writing stuff and making videos. I get that. But unless I want to start making video essays or something— which I do not want to do because screw video editing and screw my shitty voice— I don't have a solution to that problem.

In conclusion, I wish that I had someone looking over my shoulder while I was writing *Verde's Doohickey*. Because if I did, I am 100% certain it would have turned out better than this.

The Saga of Dawn and Dusk continues in...

[The Malice of Abigale Quinlan](#)



Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra
By Natalie Neumann



Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra
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Content Warning: *Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra* contains content that some readers might find disturbing, triggering or uncomfortable. This includes sexually explicit activities, strong language, and incest. Reader discretion is advised.

First published: September 6, 2022
www.Natalie.TF

Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra is an alternate continuation of *Verde's Doohickey*. Six months after coming into possession of a mysterious body switching device— the VD— Jad Novus and friends have learned much about themselves and their friends through their regular body swap adventures. However, these playful days come to an end as the VD suddenly breaks, swapping around their bodies one final time. With no means of ever returning to 'normal' they accept these new bodies as their own and begin their new lives.

In the universe of *The Saga of Dawn and Dusk*, there are hundreds of different ways that the story of *Verde's Doohickey* continues, and this is merely one possible continuation. A continuation where happiness is found through tragedy and the lives of the main cast are changed forever.

This novella was originally released on September 6, 2022, seven years after the original August 15, 2015 release of *Verde's Doohickey*.

These chapters assume that the reader is already familiar with the events and characters of *Verde's Doohickey*, and Natalie Neumann strongly encourages readers to read *Verde's Doohickey* before *Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra*. However, character profiles have been prepared to refresh readers' memories and to make the story more approachable to new readers.

Character Profiles

These profiles reflect the characters as they were at the end of Session 16 of *Verde's Doohickey* on November 25, 2014.



Name: Jad Novus

Date of Birth: 10/15/1996 (18-years-old)

Height: 177 cm

Weight: 57 kg

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: White (75% German, 25% Polish)

Personality: A timid and kind young man who prefers to stay in the background and rarely opens up to anyone outside of his circles of friends and acquaintances. He is an analytical and intelligent person, but he has several quirks that have burdened him throughout his entire life. Such as his chronic discomfort around nudity and sexually explicit imagery, an inferiority complex, and myriad anxieties that he does not fully understand. He struggles to love himself, even as he is given support and affection from those around him.

Background: As Jad entered adolescence, the relationship between his parents, Bryce Novus and Caroline Steticks, became both violent and sexually abusive. Though they were divorced in January 2013, Jad was still scarred by watching their relationship collapse, and bears a palpable disdain for Bryce. To escape his troubled home life, Jad formed exceptionally strong bonds with his friends, and considers them to be part of his 'true' family.



Name: Maxxisaurus Omega Flare (Maxxie Flare)

Date of Birth: 11/18/1996 (18-years-old)

Height: 167 cm

Weight: 64 kg

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Blasian (25% Black, 12.50% Filipino, 12.50% Indian, 12.50% Indonesian, 12.50% Korean, 6.25% Chinese, 6.25% Japanese, 6.25% Malaysian, 6.25% Vietnamese)

Personality: Around those she cares about, Maxxie is abrasive, jokey, downright silly, and all around loving. She is always full of energy, has a go-getter attitude about most things, and does whatever she can to make life more exciting or fun. She has an adoration for the perverse and obscure, boundless creativity, a blatantly perverted nature, and a penchant for inane and mostly useless knowledge. A self-described 'weird girl' who frequently adds to her pile of innumerable eccentricities.

Background: Born as the first child of the illustrious Flare family, Maxxie has enjoyed a cushy upbringing that informed her views on life. Despite not having any significant responsibilities, she quickly dedicated herself to the arts from a young age, becoming an exceptionally skilled drawer/illustrator and continuing to improve her craft with each passing day. Her other passions flutter in the realm of anime and video games, but most especially, hanging around with the friends who have accepted her Maxxie-isms and learned to love her... *more or less*.



Name: Zoe Xing

Date of Birth: 03/14/1997 (17-years-old)

Height: 192 cm

Weight: 72 kg

Gender: Male

Race/Ethnicity: Chinese/Ukrainian (50% Chinese, 50% Ukrainian)

Personality: A serious and diligent young man who believes to have seen the harsh realities of this world, and is committed to becoming a success in life. Despite his ambitions, he is mature, respectful, calm, and never loses his cool around others. The only time he loosens up is around his friends, Jad, Maxxie, and Shiaka, but among them, he has a reputation for being a 'stick in the mud.'

Background: Zoe's father passed away when he was 5-years-old, leaving his family in a difficult financial situation. While his mother got through this by her own volition and the generosity of Maxxie's parents, these hardships shaped him and encouraged him to mature faster than his years. He is generally well adjusted after this experience, but he still exerts a barrier between himself and others. Even his dearest friends.

SHIAKA KUROKAWA



Name: Shiaka Kurokawa

Date of Birth: 01/30/1997 (17-years-old)

Height: 157 cm

Weight: 43 kg

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Japanese/Mexican (50% Japanese, 50% Mexican)

Personality: Around her friends and family, Shiaka is a meek and demure young woman with a calming air to her. Someone who rarely ever raises her voice, and tries to be as nice and helpful as possible, sometimes against her better judgment. Around others though, she is incredibly fragile, struggling to maintain a conversation with them, and often looking for a means of escape.

Background: Shiaka was viciously assaulted by her fellow school children when she was 8-years-old, nearly killing her in the process. This event physically and mentally scarred her, forcing her to go through years of therapy as she learned to trust other people again. While she learned to open up around Jad, Zoe, and Maxxie, she is still intimidated by others, and struggles with all forms of unsolicited physical contact. She has grown tougher over the years, but is still fragile to her very core.



Name: Caroline Steticks

Date of Birth: 01/11/1980 (34-years-old)

Height: 169 cm

Weight: 58 kg

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: White (50% German, 50% Polish)

Personality: Caroline is a sweet woman who, despite all she has gone through, has held onto kindness as the highest virtue and holds those dear to her on a pedestal. Namely Jad and his friends. She has learned to be a calming and helpful presence, but still has occasional depressive episodes when she recalls what she went through and what she subjected her only child to.

Background: When she was 16, Caroline entered a relationship with an older man named Bryce Novus. She quickly fell for him, offered him her virginity, and after finding herself pregnant, she married him. While their relationship was strong for a few years, it soured as time went on, with Bryce becoming demanding of Caroline before eventually abusing her. While she was eventually able to divorce Bryce and remove him from her life, she still bears the emotional scars of their relationship and is in the process of rediscovering who she is.

BABS PEQUOT



Name: Barbara Ophelia Pequot (Babs Pequot)

Date of Birth: 09/12/1980 (34-years-old)

Height: 175 cm

Weight: 66 kg

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic (50% Mexican, 50% Puerto Rican)

Personality: As the woman who predominantly raised Maxxie, she unsurprisingly carries many of the same traits. She is a sarcastic, joking, and slightly crass woman with a penchant for taking things casually and rarely ever gets worked up about anything. However, she deeply cares about those close to her, especially Maxxie and Terra.

Background: Due to complicated family-related issues she refuses to divulge upon, Babs left her home and dropped out of high school, before obtaining her GED at age 16. With this qualification in hand, she entered the workforce, where she heard of a caretaker position for the newborn child of Kenneth and Eleanore Flare. Despite having no qualifications, the newborn Maxxie took a liking to her, and she was hired to raise the child while the parents continued their careers. 18 years later, she is still taking care of the house along with the Flare sisters, and does not regret her decision in the slightest.



Name: Terra Turbo Flare

Date of Birth: 02/29/2004 (10-years-old)

Height: 140 cm

Weight: 35 kg

Gender: Female

Race/Ethnicity: Blasian (25% Black, 12.50% Filipino, 12.50% Indian, 12.50% Indonesian, 12.50% Korean, 6.25% Chinese, 6.25% Japanese, 6.25% Malaysian, 6.25% Vietnamese)

Personality: A shy and uncertain girl grappling with her own gender identity. In many ways, she is an opposite of Maxxie, lacking her confidence and bravado, and needing others to encourage her, rather than encouraging others.

Background: Born as Maxxie's younger sibling, Terra was remarkably unlike her sister, being more passive and timid, and choosing to spend time by herself, rather than with other children her age. She was brandished with love from those around her, but felt like something was off about her life. Through much rumination, she eventually realized that she was transgender and wanted to live the rest of her life as a girl. A desire she was able to satiate thanks to the VD.

Session Extra.1: Adoration



When I first saw the VD— when I first experienced what it could do— it was like a dream come true. The idea of becoming someone else had always been a fantasy of mine, and one that I thought would never happen. But as I stood in my sister’s body and saw her in mine, I realized just how... tangible such a fantasy was.

I was struggling with my own identity. I was scared of the looming monster that is puberty. My male peers were excited about it. Growing taller, stronger, hairier, and harder, but the thought disgusted me on a deep level. I did not want my body to transform against my will and, the more I thought about it, the more I realized what I *actually* wanted. That I did not want puberty to forge me into a man. I wanted it to transform me into a woman.

It took all my courage to express this desire to Maxxie, to tell her that I was transgender, and the very next day, she lent me her body. When I looked down, I saw the body of a girl. When I spoke, I heard a feminine voice escape my lips. The feeling of the hair billowing down to my shoulders, the way my body’s weight shifted as I walked. It was... everything I had hoped for.

Two days later, I attended school as Maxxie’s gorgeous and timid friend, Shiaka Kurokawa. While the experience of being a high schooler intimidated me, being in her skin, being seen as her by hundreds of people, and people acting like there was nothing wrong— It shattered all doubts about who I wanted to be.

For as much comfort as their bodies brought me, I knew they were merely reprieves from being myself. If I wanted to look like them, sound like them, and feel like them, I would need to change *my* body. I came out to Mom and Dad on Thanksgiving, and two weeks later, I was on puberty blockers. I wanted to be on something more... transformative, but I was only 10, and there was a limit to what could be done until I got older.

In the meantime, the five of us— Maxxie, myself, Jad, Zoe, and Shiaka— made regular use of the VD for some time, often spending days as one another. Sometimes it was as part of an ‘experiment,’ but most of the time we just swapped because Maxxie thought it would be fun, and I don’t think any of us would disagree. It was a magical little secret of ours... but it did not stay that way for very long.

On December 20, 2014, during the Flare family Christmas party, Maxxie introduced the VD to everyone in our extended friend and family group. Mom, Dad, and Babs. Jad Novus’s mother, Caroline Steticks. Zoe Xing’s mother, Natasha Xing. Shiaka Kurokawa’s big sister Haruki, along with her parents, Paz and Daisuke. Seconds after introducing the VD, Maxxie swapped all thirteen of us around and... to say that things were awkward, exhilarating, and confusing during that party would be an understatement. But it was, *somehow*, less crazy than what happened on New Year’s...

Some were reluctant to use the VD, such as Caroline, Natasha, Paz and Daisuke. While Babs, Mom, Dad, and Haruki were all eager to embrace the act of being someone else. But in the end, we all wound up using it quite a bit. To the point where I think that everybody... except for me... wound up in everyone else’s body *at least* once. Probably twice.

It was a... *strange* experience that brought all of us closer. While Jad, Maxxie, Zoe, and Shiaka were all impeccably close friends, their parents were not much more than acquaintances. But once they started getting a taste for the VD, that changed. They even started their own biweekly ‘adult swap club.’

Personally, I was immensely grateful to these women as they lent me their bodies. Thanks to them, I was able to see what it was like to be an adult, to be a woman, and live a day in their life. It wasn’t always what I expected, and I was introduced to the aches of being a 52-year-old woman about four decades too soon, but I still cherished the time I was allowed to spend in their bodies. There was always a slight disappointment when I had to return to myself. But I would always walk away from this experience with a slightly better idea of the type of woman I wanted to be once I grew up.

...If my phrasing there wasn’t enough of an indicator, I never once swapped with a man as, well, my original body was *masculine enough*. I knew I didn’t want to spend any portion of my life living as a *man* and... I was not the only one.

Ever since November, I had a suspicion that Jad was transgender. The way they looked at themselves when in a female body compared to a male one. The fact they got facial electrolysis at age 17. The way they reacted to anything involving nudity or sex. And the expression I got whenever I tried explaining the sense of euphoria I felt when in a biologically female body. I held off on broaching this issue for a few months, but, thankfully, she came to terms with herself sooner than later. In late January, she came out to us as Jade. She chose to continue presenting as male for the time being, while HRT did its magic, but we all were beyond thrilled for her. ...Even if it made it harder to arrange body swaps, since there were two people who *only* wanted to be girls.

For as much as we partook in body swapping, we always kept our swaps short. Most only lasted a few hours, some a full day, maybe a week at most. Yet that all changed once summer began. On June 1, 2015, Jade, Caroline, Maxxie, Babs, Zoe, Shiaka, and myself gathered around for what was supposed to be the start of a month-long body swap.

This was something proposed by Zoe and Shiaka, who were fascinated in the more scientific angle of body swapping. How swapping with another person changed one's sense of self, their perception of the world, and how they interacted with others. Most of it went over my head, but I was curious as to what it would feel like to be in another body for a prolonged period of time.

Once we reviewed the guidelines set out by Zoe and Shiaka, Jade pulled the VD from her bag, ready to use it for the first time in a week. She used the enigmatic violet device to register herself and her mother, but as she pressed the 'Go!' button, the VD emitted a loud beeping sound. We did not even know it had a speaker.

We gathered around the device in Jade's hands, and on its graphing-calculator-like screen, it did not display the names of Jade and Caroline. Instead, it read 'VDVerse Error.' Seconds later, we were blinded by an ultraviolet light that gave us the same weightless feeling of the VD. When we opened our eyes a second later, we found ourselves in different bodies.

I was in the body of my sister, Maxxie.

Maxxie was in the body of our caregiver, Babs.

Babs was in my body.

Jade switched with her mother, Caroline.

Caroline swapped with Jade.

Zoe found himself in Shiaka's body.

While Shiaka looked down to see the body of Zoe.

After figuring out who was who, we looked down at the VD itself, and saw that its monochrome LCD screen was blank. The buttons no longer did anything and after prying open its case—something we never dared to do— we discovered that the device’s interior was... hollow. Whatever was within this device vanished, and not a single wire or circuit board remained.

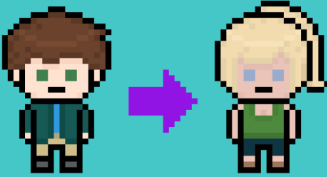
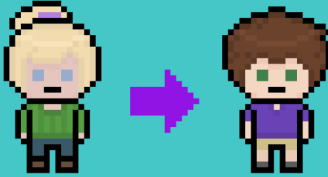
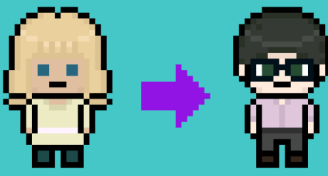
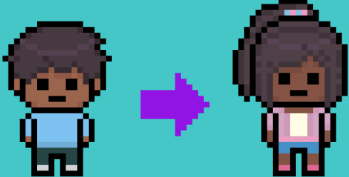
In other words... We were stuck like this. Our body swapping remote was broken, and we had no means of contacting its creator, Verde. The package she had delivered to Jade had no address, and the CD-ROM she included with it had mysteriously rotted away.

Through a mere ‘error’ our body swapping journey came to a close.

After three days with no solution, we chose to accept that there was no way back to our original bodies. We stopped clinging to our old names, our old lives, and picked up our new lives where their original owner left them, while taking things in a different direction.

Things were dissonant at first. But as time went on, as we explained the situation to those in our circle of trust, we began forging a new normal. And now, with the end of summer looming over the horizon, we finally had a firm understanding of who we now were.

Who Is Who?

WHO IS WHO?	
 JADE IS LYNNE	 CAROLINE IS JAD
 ZOE IS SHIAKA	 SHIAKA IS ZOE
 MAXXIE IS BARBARA	 BABS IS TYLER
 TERRA IS MAXINE	VERDE'S DOOHICKEY SESSION EXTRA

Jade is Lynne
Caroline is Jad
Zoe is Shiaka
Shiaka is Zoe
Maxxie is Barbara
Babs is Tyler
Terra is Maxine

Saturday, August 15, 2015 - 13:03

The summer sun hung high in the sky, shimmering across the backyard pool of the Flare household. It was a simple concrete hole in the ground, with a conveniently placed awning, containing lounge chairs, and a barbecue. From there, the yard expanded into a vast lawn, perfect for play or sport, while dense walls of trees and shrubbery surrounded all sides, granting its residence both of shade and privacy.

It was, in many ways, fitting for a family as wealthy as the Flare household, though its owners would be the first to comment on how seldom they took advantage of it. Except for days like today, when the skies were clear, the wind was brisk, and humidity was relatively low considering the time of year.

As the poolside clock passed 13:00, a woman left the three-story home attached to this yard, opening the door with her rear as she carried out two large plates. One full of meat, the other with veggies and breads. She whistled to herself as she made way to the table by the barbecue, placing them down before smirking at the grill before her, her dark eyes shimmering with determination.

Her name was Barbara Pequot. A 34-year-old Hispanic woman with tan skin, charcoal hair nestled up into a ponytail, dressed in a black bikini, with white flip-flops on her feet, and an unbuttoned white cover-up on her shoulders. Slightly overweight at 68 kilograms, but it went into the 'right places,' filling out her swimsuit nicely, even if it was *slightly* tighter than she felt it should have been.

As Barbara started up the grill and threw some chicken kabob on it, she paused as she heard a familiar nervous pitter patter coming from behind.

Turning her head, she saw Maxine, her eyes on the ground and a nervous smile on her dark freckled face. Her dark wavy hair flowed down her brown shoulders and the straps of her violet swimsuit. It was technically a one piece, but with an exposed back, straps that latched around her curvy hips, and just as many that went up her B-cup breasts before reaching around her back. She looked like a homely girl forced to 'strut her stuff' and while there was a faint glimmer of excitement on her face, it was snuffed out by worry.

Maxine: "G-Gosh, are you sure this swimsuit is really appropriate?"

Barbara: "Girl, that's not even a bikini. There's *nothing* wrong with it. Hell, you could swim in the nude for all we care. It's not like we haven't seen everything *that body* has to offer."

Maxine: "B-Barbara, that was a *lifetime* ago, and... I am much more reserved than the perverted girl I once was."

Barbara: “Oh, so you’re admitting *you* were a pervert? You know, that has nothing to do with the comment I made. I was just talking about our swap days, but it’s nice to see you embracing your true nature, *sistah*.”

Maxine: “Please don’t tell me it’s going to be one of *those* days...”

Barbara: “Nah. I’m the grillmaster today. I’ve got better things to do than tease you in the pool. Like not setting the place on fire. *Although*, if you want some *bonding time* after everybody leaves, I’d be more than happy to serve *the mistress*.”

Maxine: “I swear, you’re becoming a bigger and bigger perv every day, Barbara.”

Barbara: “What can I say? I’m making up for lost time. You should too, girl.”

Maxine: “I’ll... consider it.”

Barbara: “Ah, a political answer. *I like it!*”

Maxine: “So, where is everybody? I thought we were meeting here at 13:00.”

Barbara: “You know how Lynne is, wanting to make sure she looks good, and when Haruki and Shi-Shi start playing dress up, *forget about it*. But I know the boys are gonna want to eat before they take a dip, so I’m getting a head start. So jump in, calm them nerves, and get ready to give some wet hugs when they come around.”

Maxine: “What about T-Tyler? I thought he was already out here.”

Barbara: “He’s probably in his room. Just, um, make sure you knock first, like a good big sis.

Maxine groaned as she thought of what Barbara was implying. While they gave each other carte blanche to do whatever with each other’s bodies, there were some things she wasn’t ready to see, and *that* was one of them.

Tyler: “No need, ladies, I just had to take care of this and that.”

As the two women heard an early pubescent male voice echo from behind them, they laid their eyes on Tyler Flare. He stood at only 1.45 meters, his frame was rather frail, even for boys his age, with his rib cage plainly visible, and his arms scrawny. His chest was flat, devoid of any fat one could grasp onto, while his dark hair was cut short, recovering from a buzz cut he got in June. He stood with a hand wrapped around his brown chin, as if he was examining the women before him, while his other hand rested on his baggy navy swimming trunks.

Barbara: “You’re 11. What could you be ‘taking care of?’”

Tyler: “What, can’t a guy have his *secrets*? You know, you never used to be this bossy, Barbara. Perhaps *Mommy and Daddy* need to have a word with you.”

Barbara: “My apologies, *young Master*. I don’t know where I developed this *insolence*.”

Maxine: “You two are having *way* too much fun with this schtick.”

Tyler: “Trust me, we are going to get old of this gag eventually, let us enjoy it while it lasts, Maxine.”

Barbara: “Yeah, we’re trying to take this joke and throw it *in a fucking vat*. Nothing wrong with that, is there, Mistress?”

Maxine: “At this point, there’s nothing really ‘wrong’ with anything, because this is just life now.”

Tyler: “Yep, and the sooner you learn to embrace what Verde gave you, the happier you’ll be, so get wet and loosen up them joints, Sis!”

As Tyler said that, he trotted across the pool patio and cannonballed into the deep end, sinking down before rising to the surface, a refreshed ‘aaah’ escaping his lips.

Tyler: “The water’s great, Maxine! So quit being a stick in the mud and join me!”

Maxine sighed as she saw her brother float through the water, before walking over to join him. She scrunched her body up, as if readying for a cannonball, but as she felt her back straps, she decided to sit down, wet her feet, and then plop her body in.

Tyler: “*Weak*. C’m on Sis, you’re *still* a kid, so act like one. Even if you break something, you’ll recover just fine.”

Tyler then grabbed Maxine by the hand and started dragging her into the deep end. As the two frolicked about in the water, Barbara continued to man the grill, finishing up the first round of food and filling up one of her many plates. After she filled up the grill a second time, she heard the wooden gate to the backyard open up, letting out a deliberate clunking noise. Turning her head, her eyes landed on Lynne and Jad.

Lynne’s blue eyes were obscured by the sunglasses on her face as she entered, but she flicked them up onto her forehead as she started walking toward Babs. Her long blonde hair was gathered into a high ponytail that left enough hair to frame her face. Her ordinarily fair skin had darkened a smidgen from the season. While her body was dressed in an open lightweight forest green jacket that revealed a white bikini underneath. She walked forward on her one inch heel

sandals, swaying her hips in a faintly exaggerated manner, before reaching Barbara and embracing her in a hug.

Lynne: “Heya, Barb! How are things?”

As they hugged, Barbara sneaked a peek at Lynne’s D-cups, hoping that she wouldn’t notice. Lynne did. But she didn’t care to say anything.

Barbara: “Eh, same old same old. Looking after the kids while trying to arrange a li’l *soiree* like this.”

Lynne: “Um, a *soiree* is typically during the evening, not the afternoon... and they tend to be a lot fancier than a BBQ.”

Barbara: “Seriously? There are too many goldarn words for parties that only limit it to evening events, when parties can, *and should*, happen at every hour of the day.”

Jad: “I’m pretty sure nobody needs to, *or should*, party at 10 AM.”

Jad joined his mother under the awning as she spoke to Barbara, and winked at her with his saturated green eyes. His curly brown hair was long enough to cover his ears, while his pale skin and frail frame looked both darker and more developed than it was at the start of the summer. He wasted little time tossing aside his blue hoodie, revealing his chest, mostly flat and fairly toned, except for small tufts of tissue resting around his nipples. A remnant from his four months on HRT.

He tightened the drawstrings on his green swim trunks and took off his backpack before turning his attention to the food that Barbara had just taken off the grill.

Jad: “Looking pretty good, Barbara. You mind if I—”

Barbara: “First come first serve. How much do you want?”

Jad: “Um... I just had some fruit for breakfast, so... screw it. I’ll probably end up having kabob, two burgers, and some potatoes. ...But just a burger for the moment.”

Lynne: “You sure about that? I know your metabolism is a thing to murk for, but—”

Jad: “Lynne, I’m borderline underweight, and I’m 18. It’s fine.”

Lynne: “Okay, just work off some of the calories in the pool.”

Jad: “Will do!”

As he said that, Jad began preparing himself a burger, throwing on some tomato and onion before taking a bite and walking alongside the pool, where he sat in a chair next to Maxine and Tyler. As he did so, Lynne grabbed a chicken kabob and bit into it. She finished her mouthful, standing next to Maxxie, and let out a sigh.

Barbara: “Boys will be boys?”

Lynne: “More than *I*’ll ever know. It’s surreal to think about how quickly he changed.”

Barbara: “That’s a good thing though. It’s his life, and the sooner he makes it his own, the better. And while he’s *defo* not the sort of guy you thought he’d be, you still love him all the same.”

Lynne: “Of course I do. He’s... he’s my *son*, and with every passing day, I learn to love him a bit more.”

Barbara: “What about you, how are you holding up? I mean, I still have my games and art and stuff. I don’t get as much free time as I used to because of my new responsibilities, but I still feel like I can be... myself. Just in a slightly more mature way.”

Lynne: “For me, it’s... more complicated than that. I guess I’m still coming to terms with myself and who I am now. On one hand, I still love a lot of the things I used to love, but I feel like I *should* be different. I’m a 35-year-old woman. I don’t feel *that old*, but I feel like I should be more mature and get started on whatever I want to do with the rest of my life.”

Barbara: “You don’t need to *do* much though. You’ve got money from your divorce and everything, and even if it is not enough for you to get by, guess who’s going to get a job in a few years. Did he decide on a major anyway?”

Lynne: “Not really. He’s just going for general stuff and hoping to see where his interests lie. I’ve... actually been thinking about taking a class. Continuing my education, learning a skill to get a part-time job or something, just so I feel like I’m... doing more, I suppose. Registration is still open, so in theory, I could get into Oransen Community College.”

Barbara: “Eh, I say wait until the spring semester to try. Get acclimated with things, see what you *really want* before you make a commitment.”

Lynne: “What about you, do you still have a desire to—”

Barbara: “Lynne-Lynne, I’ve already got a 7-days-a-week job. I’ve got my GED and I’ve got *employment for life*. I’m *good*.”

Lynne: “Heh. Yeah, I guess college isn’t really your thing, and with art, you are always learning.”

Barbara: “You say that like you aren’t an artist, when you could always pick up that novel you trunked.”

Lynne: “Oh, I’m not sure if I could continue that. I mean, I’m not in the right headspace anymore and—”

Barbara: “If you want to feel like you’re doing something, just be a novelist or something. I know some guys who can help with digital publishing and shaz. You won’t make much money off of it, I’ll tell you that for free, but if you want to be fulfilled, there ain’t nothing wrong with being a writer. Besides, I see that bulge in your jacket. You were gonna *read* while at a pool party, ya nerd!”

Lynne: “W-Well, I just brought it as an option, in case I—”

Barbara: “Yeah, yeah, ya classy MILF. We’ve got pool loungers in the shed if you want one. Let the sun shine on you while catching up on your... what are you reading?”

Lynne: “It’s a... crime thriller series I got into. I started reading the first book when Jad and I were flying to Europe earlier this summer and—”

Barbara: “You’re halfway through book number three?”

Lynne: “H-How’d you know?”

Barbara: “You’re not as opaque as you may think you are, *Miss Steticks*. I know *you* inside and out.”

As Lynne was being grilled by her friend, she cast her eyes at the grill her friend should’ve been attending.

Lynne: “...You might wanna flip the burgers.”

Barbara: “*Ah shit!* Hope you guys don’t mind things a li’l crispy.”

With Barbara tending the grill, Lynne walked over to the pool shed, where she was joined by Maxine.

Maxine: “H-Hi, Lynne. You’re looking lovely as usual.”

Lynne: “Aw, thank you so much. I was worried this would be a bit... risque, but I’ve been working hard for this body, so I may as well reap the benefits. You’re looking mighty cute

yourself there, Maxx— *Maxine*. The color looks great on you, and I can tell you've been losing weight."

Maxine: "W-Well, it's just been a bit of dieting and not having as much junk food. I... I've come to learn that I feel a bit more comfortable with myself when I'm a little thinner."

Their conversation continued as they pilfered through the shed, grabbing a lounge, some inner tubes, and an armful of pool noodles.

Lynne: "The important thing is that it's working. So, have you decided what you're doing in autumn?"

Maxine: "I'm... going to do some independent studying. I think I need a year to get acclimated with myself before going to college."

Lynne: "Heh. Good for you. Too many people rush into college without figuring out what they really want. You get less scholarships that way, but OCC's so cheap you don't really need one."

Lynne and Maxine's conversation then brought them to the pool, where they looked over Jad and Tyler, roughhousing in the water.

Maxine: "But, Jad's planning on going to college and he... is still coming to terms with himself, right?"

Lynne: "Boys can be... a bit *simpler* sometimes. It's all down to the brain chemicals and hormones."

Tyler: "You know we can hear you, *Lynne*."

Lynne: "Yeah, I know. I'm just calling it like I see it. Or do you two *boys* have an objection?"

Jad: "No objection here. A boy's life is pretty breezy, all things considered."

Tyler: "*Especially an upper-middle-class White boy...*"

Jad: "You say something, Ty?"

Tyler: "Nothing you don't already know, *J-Styles*."

With her hellos made, Lynne wasted little time plopping her lounge float into the pool, gingerly lowering herself onto the mesh. Her legs and butt dipped into the pool, while her upper body was left relatively dry. She positioned herself near the shallow end, found a cozy spot right in the

sunlight, and began reading her novel. Though, before she could get a hundred words in, she heard the wooden gate open.

Zoe Xing casually walked into the yard, dressed in a lightweight black jacket, carrying a cloth bag over his shoulder. Instead of his usual glasses, he wore a pair of sunglasses that blocked off his hazel eyes, yet rested well on his face, adding to his naturally mature look. His dark hair was cut shorter than normal, and while his toned frame looked slightly more doughy and pale than it did at the start of the summer, he still met every criteria for an attractive man. Especially after he unzipped his jacket, exposing both his shaved chest and his choice in swimwear. Rather than going with the usual trunks, he opted for a pair of black swimming briefs that clung to his form, and did not do a great job of obscuring his eight inches. ...Assuming that was the point to begin with.

He greeted everyone in the yard with a smile and wave, while holding the gate open for his companion, Shiaka Kurokawa.

Her tan skin had slightly darkened from the summer sun, while her once flowing blonde hair had been cut down to chin-length, with a stylish braid resting in front of her right ear. She was dressed in a sweatshirt and, much like Zoe, wasted little time plucking it over her head, revealing her dark brown two-piece swimsuit. Her breasts, large considering her petite frame, bounced slightly as she took off this garment. However, the truly eye-catching thing about Shiaka's physique was her torso.

She was a thin young woman, but along her entire torso there were a multitude of light, almost pinkish, lines. The remnants from physical trauma she was subjected to a decade ago. These scars covered her torso, most in the front, but some stretching to the back, and while they had all healed about as well as one could imagine, it was a sight that would surprise most onlookers. ...Just not present company.

Barbara: "About time you showed up. If there's one person I expected to be punctual here, it's you, Zoe."

Zoe: "It was my intention to be early, but *somebody* just couldn't decide what to wear."

Shiaka: "Which is code for, we had to go and buy a new swimsuit for me. I had a swimsuit, but it was a one-piece and it didn't *fit* me all too well, *if you catch my drift*."

Barbara simply looked at Shiaka's boobs and snickered.

Barbara: "Well, you have grown a lot over the past three and a half years."

Shiaka: "Yeah, two cup sizes and four centimeters. What I wouldn't give for an extra five. That's all I want."

Zoe: “I don’t know, I kind of like you being this short, it makes you easier to... *carry!*”

With a single motion, Zoe grabbed Shiaka by the back and knees, carrying her in his arms.

Zoe: “*Oof*. Now I’m starting to see why you thought I should work out more.”

Shiaka: “Oh, don’t think you can back off now, Zoe! Carry me, my darling, cast me into the water like the *delicate flower* that I am.”

Zoe: “Y-Yes, sweetie.”

Zoe began carrying Shiaka forward, from the grill area over to the pool, taking slow and steady steps while Shiaka casually kicked off her slip-on shoes. Once at the pool, Zoe tried to gently lower his carried princess into the water... only for his grip to falter, and for her body to splatter against the water.

Shiaka rose from the water and gave Zoe a snide look. Zoe prepared himself for a bit of teasing, only for Lynne to look up from her book and at Zoe. Specifically, his swimming wear. More specifically, *his dick*.

Lynne: “You’re half an hour late and *that’s* what you went with?”

Zoe: “Eheh. That was... a suggestion by the girlfriend. She wanted something a bit more... complimentary to my figure.”

Lynne: “*It sure compliments something.*”

Zoe: “I beg your pardon?”

Lynne: “It looks nice on you Zoe. Very *masculine.*”

Shiaka: “I know, right? He’s got a great body. He just needs to embrace it a little bit more.”

Zoe: “I... have my reasons for being a bit... reluctant about various things.”

Jad: “Yeah, but we’re not at a job interview or anything, dude. You’re 18, loosen up and enjoy your youth.”

Barbara: “Jad’s right. Lord knows what I’d give to be screwing around with you all instead of cooking. Speaking of which, second round of food’s ready for whoever’s hungry”

Shiaka: “I *just* got into the pool...”

Barbara: “That was your call, *sistah*. Eat up or call dibs.”

Maxine: “C-C’mon, Shiaka. I have some... stuff I want to talk to you about.”

Shiaka: “...I’ll eat something. But just a kabob and some veggies.”

Tyler: “Shiaka, you weigh less than 45 kilos.”

Shiaka: “And I intend to stay that way until my low weight becomes a health hazard.”

From there, all seven gathered under the awning, their bodies dripping wet and their butts planted into the seats surrounding the wooden patio table. A table strewn with burgers, chicken kabobs, potatoes, cucumber salad, and a tray of veggies, nothing too special. Regardless, they wasted little time filling up their plates... or at least the boys did. The girls had more sense and ate more reasonable portions. They still *probably* grabbed more than they should have, but screw it, this was a pool party after all.

As they indulged in a characteristically erratic conversation, Maxine and Shiaka were quick to finish their portions, and excused themselves from the table, heading over to the far end of the pool, where they gathered under the shade.

Shiaka: “So, what did you want to talk about?”

Maxine: “Well, it’s just about how you’ve been... adapting to all of this. You seem so... comfortable now. Almost more comfortable than you were before. For Lynne and I, the reason why is pretty obvious, we both wanted something *like* this. *Sorta*. But you though... you just sort of ran with it.”

Shiaka: “...At the start of summer, I had these grand ideas for what I would do. Both during the season and during the next four years. I had a plan in my head and, before I could act upon it, everything changed in an instant. I had to reassess my priorities, what I wanted to do with my life and, with it, I began to question who I was. I viewed the world as something powerful, something that I needed to fight against to get what I desired. I slowly amassed what I needed throughout my time at school, but now... I’m not sure if what I thought I wanted was what I really wanted. Now, I don’t have a rigid plan. I still have a plan, going to college and getting my credits, but aside from that, I’m... just doing what feels right in the moment, and feeling out who I want to be.”

Maxine: “Before the start of the summer, I always felt like you locked your true self away. You came out of your shell from time to time, and you were brilliant when you did. But now, you’ve cracked your shell away and... you seem a lot happier this way.”

Shiaka: “In some ways, I am. I’ve been having a lot of... *fun* with the way things are now. Now that I don’t have the same burdens strewn before me. But if I could go back... *I would*. Will I think the same way come year end? *God only knows*.”

Maxine: “In some ways, I kind of envy you. You just seem so much more confident now, while I... I’m so timid. I know I shouldn’t be, that I should try to have as much fun with this situation as possible but—”

Shiaka: “Everybody’s situation here is different. Hell, I’d argue that what I’m doing is not necessarily *healthy*. You just need to find out what makes Maxine happy and do that. Take your time, and remember you’re 18. You still have your *whole life* ahead of you.”

Maxine: “I know, but I’m not worried about just myself. I’m worried about Barbara. Tyler has his whole life ahead of him and is eager to grow up, but Barbara, she... doesn’t. She aged well, but in 30 years, I don’t know if she’ll be happy with her body and what she did in life. And me, I... I feel like I was thrown into a world I admired from afar and, while it is everything I thought it would be, I was not ready for it. For... all of this being thrust upon me, with no way back.”

Shiaka: “You are worrying about things you can’t control and looking back at what could have been. If you take that road, you will never reach a place of happiness. I have made mistakes, I have regrets, but all I can do is keep going. Onwards, upwards, forwards— whichever direction. So long as I’m not treading old ground.”

While these two indulged in their own private conversation, the five at the table had moved past the cavalier and sporadic phase of the conversation, and settled onto something a touch deeper.

Tyler: “—No joke, I don’t even want to *think* about starting school on Tuesday.”

Zoe: “Considering you’re *almost certainly* the smartest kid in your class, I have to ask why.”

Barbara: “Maybe it’s because middle school’s the pits?”

Jad: “Tell me about it. Teenagers are vicious creeps who will harass you for crap you did a whole year ago.”

Lynne: “Middle school *can* be alright, but most of the time it is ruined by the people attending the school.”

Tyler: “Exactly. If I could just take a test to skip past middle school, *I would*. And I would probably pass that sucker after... two months of studying, *tops*. But *noooo*. I can’t get my GED until I’m 16.”

Zoe: “Do you even have a career in mind?”

Tyler: “Isn’t that what college is for?”

Barbara: “Maybe nowadays... but why don’t you at least try to make some friends with kids your age, maybe get a *girlfriend*? Because when you hang out with a bunch of kids seven years older than you, you’re *obviously* going to want to feel like you’re older.”

Tyler: “I don’t want to *feel* older. I just don’t want to waste my youth in an inefficient education system.”

Lynne: “You sure sound like an 11-year-old right now. Old enough to think that he knows better, and too young to accept the inefficiencies for what they are.”

Tyler: “Sounds like *someone* gave up.”

Barbara: “hold on to that fire, Tyler. Let it fuel you for years to come and then, maybe, you can change the world with *your own two hands*!”

Zoe: “If that is the case, he should’ve probably enrolled at a private school. If only for the connections.”

Jad: “Yeah, about that, why did you decide to slum it with the ‘riff-raff’ again?”

Tyler: “Because the private school’s a full hour away.”

Lynne: “Wait, what about... oh, right. You don’t want to go to a Montessori school.”

Tyler: “I’d rather *beg* to be homeschooled.”

Barbara: “I mean, Ken and Ellie would agree to that pretty quickly, but I’m sure the teacher would have an *awful lot* of questions.”

Tyler: “They’d agree, but I feel like Mom and Dad have gone through enough these past few months.”

Jad: “I still can’t believe that they ‘wished’ they were part of this.”

Tyler: “Do you remember how long it took them before they got ‘wild’ at the Christmas party?”

Lynne: “But would it help them when they’re working their butts off in Indonesia or the Philippines?”

Barbara: “*Definitely*. They would be horny as hell, but they would be operating on a whole ‘nother level.”

Zoe: “That... actually reminds me of something I want to talk to Jad about. ...In private.”

Jad: “Hmm? Oh, sure thing, dude.”

Jad then stuffed the rest of his second burger into his mouth before chewing and walking along with Zoe, where they gathered around the back door. Zoe had a worried look on his face as he glanced down at his frame, inspiring Jad to throw his arm around his shoulder. Though, considering Zoe was 15 centimeters taller than him, it looked like it should have been the other way around.

Jad: “So, what’s got you troubled?”

Zoe: “Lots of things. Things are still awkward around my mother. Shiaka’s acting differently than I expected and I’m... feeling a little lost with everything that’s been going on in our lives. What I wanted to do with my life hasn’t really changed and, strangely, it’s probably gotten *easier* for me, as I’ve become more... *desirable* to employers. Despite this, I feel like I am constantly at odds with myself. Even standing here, dressed like this, with my... *everything* plainly visible. I... I feel like I’m going through an identity crisis, and I’m not sure if I like who I’m becoming.”

Jad: “Zoe, I know that feeling. I’ve... been pushing myself into a role. Trying to become someone different from who I once was. I’m messing around with my comfort zone, trying to become more masculine, and while I *like* it, I also don’t really know if I’m moving in the right direction. We are still going through some *shit*. It’s okay if we make mistakes and do things that are embarrassing, as that’s part of life. It’s part of growing up. And we both have a lot of growing up to do before we reach our final form.”

Zoe: “You’re right, everything I know you’re saying is right, but I still... feel like I am doing something wrong *constantly*. Everything is so different and while Shiaka has been helping me, our relationship has changed so much that I’m starting to question things. I have always known *her* to be an attractive woman, and *myself* to be a handsome man, but my attraction was more admiration before and now that she’s let herself be so much more open and outgoing, my feelings toward her have changed. I... While you and your mother were spending two weeks in Europe earlier this summer, her and I, we... We officially became boyfriend and girlfriend again.”

Jad: “To tell you the truth, Zoe, I already assumed that. I mean, your display earlier and the whole princess carry thing— she’s clearly leading this relationship, but the romantic overtones were plain as day.”

Zoe: “I know, but... considering my past with her, I don’t know if I really want this or—”

Jad: “Remember the ‘Barbara’ mantra. If it feels so good, then it can’t be wrong.”

Zoe: “That mantra could be misappropriated *so easily*.”

Jad: “If it feels so good, *and nobody gets hurt*, then it can’t be wrong.”

Zoe: “I suppose that’s true. She’s acting like she wants this, but I know that deep down, there has to be a part of her that’s hurting. She tried so hard to get her life in place, and it was all ruined so... abruptly. It—”

Jad: “Zoe, don’t act like this isn’t a seven-way streak. We’re all in this together, we all lost something, and while... While some of us lost *more* than others, we promised to not hold that against each other. Nobody wanted this. Nobody asked for this. We could worry ourselves for the rest of our days, or we could *live*. I know you’re... rigid with certain things, you want to do the *right thing*, and always have, but sometimes, it’s not clear. You... are you hanging out with Shiaka tonight?”

Zoe: “Yes, she is coming over to my house for dinner, and will probably spend the night.”

Jad: “Right, right. How many nights did you spend together during your research phase?”

Zoe: “Over thirty. She even left a change of clothes in my closet.”

Jad: “*Just like Maxine and I.*”

Zoe: “We are half a meter away, I can hear you when you whisper. And... do you still have her clothes in your closet?”

Jad: “Nah. My... *feminine phase* is over, so I just returned them to her. Besides, she’s not really into sleepovers as much as she used to be.”

Zoe: “Hmm, I suppose that adds up... But yes, Shiaka and I will be alone this evening and... I will broach the subject with her. We promised to not keep secrets from each other, but I think she might be putting up a strong front.”

Jad: “*She is such a woman.*”

Zoe: “Heh. I... I guess she is and maybe seeing her turn into that is what I find so... enticing. How it *mirrors* my own growth.”

Jad: “*Oh?* Well, if you’re such a *manly man*, then you’ll have no problem getting her to open up her heart and squash the beef before you... squash... her... God, *dude shit* is so gross sometimes.”

Zoe: “You’re the one leaning into it so hard. Though... I guess you had a pretty bad role model.”

Jad: “...I somehow haven’t thought about how I would explain this whole thing to Bryce, or how Lynne would handle him now. Hopefully, he remains *out* of our lives.”

Zoe: “Do you even know where he is?”

Jad: “All I know is that the wire keeps going through every month.”

Zoe: “Oh, so *your mother* has you, *her son*, handle the finances?”

Jad: “It’s... to help me learn how to better manage my own money once I start working and living on my own... Well, I’m not sure about that bit, as I really don’t want to leave her alone.”

Zoe: “I feel the same way with my mother, but... don’t make any lifelong commitments, okay?”

Jad: “Based on what my mom’s been through, you don’t need to tell me twice.”

Once their conversation reached its end and their spirits were renewed, Jad and Zoe wasted little time before walking back to everyone else on the pool patio. The seven briefly chatted amongst themselves as they digested before, at around 14:30, they returned to the water.

With the afternoon young and a large pool all to themselves, the group began to wrack their brains for ways to busy themselves and make the most of this gorgeous summer day.

They began casually enough, jumping in and enjoying the water while drifting about and making idle conversation, before Barbara saw the clock nearing 15:00 and pulled herself out of the pool, nearly slipping as she stubbornly refused to use the ladder. Once on the patio, she looked over the pool before her and made a declaration.

Barbara: “Alright *freeloaders*, I think you’re plenty well digested at this point, so it’s time to start working off some of the fat. Summer might be coming to an end, but that does not mean you can let your *summer bodz* go to waste. As such, Barbara Ophelia Pequot orders you all to race. Eight laps in total, 200 meters, and whoever wins shall be given the double chocolate muffin in the fridge!”

Lynne: “Doesn’t making the reward a *sweet* kind of defeat the purpose of doing laps in order to get ‘in shape?’”

Maxine: “I think it makes sense. Whoever wins clearly does not need the fitness. Though, this is kind of a moot point, considering Zoe will probably win”

Zoe: “Well, I do have half a foot on all of you, so—”

Tyler: “Just get into position and throw the toys out the pool.”

Shiaka: “You’re awfully passionate for someone who will probably be dead last.”

Tyler: “What, you think you can out-swim me with those *floatation aids*?”

Jad: “You’re 11, Ty. She’s 18, and you both have pretty comparable amounts of muscle.”

Tyler: “Oh! *Now I’m getting motivated!*”

Barbara: “Battle stations, everyone! Let’s just keep it alphabetic from north to south.”

As everybody gathered into position, aligning themselves around makeshift rows, they gripped the wall with their feet and looked forward, ready for Barbara to give the signal.

Barbara: “Three... two— one— go!”

As Barbara cheated her way off the starting line, the other six followed, spreading their arms forward and kicking their legs as the sound of limbs splashing against the water spread throughout the whole backyard. However, none of them swam with the utmost proficiency.

Barbara swam competently, slightly encumbered by her curves, but twisting them in a way that let the water flow across her body. Though, she started to regret her choice in a bikini as she started the third lap, for her breasts were constantly at the cusp of falling out, and her nipples were being chafed by the polyester. At the end of lap four, she verbally declared “fuck it” before untying her top and throwing it onto the patio. Topless and not even trying to hide it, she began swimming forward, distracting Jad as he looked over and saw her exposed breasts beneath the water.

Jad maintained a clean third place from out of the gate. While thin and borderline underweight, he was an average height man who had ample opportunity to practice his swimming techniques earlier in the summer. However, he was never the straightest swimmer and while hazing at the topless woman at his side, he wound up colliding with his mother.

Lynne tumbled underwater as her son collided with her and began coughing up the chlorine-rich water as she emerged to the surface. She had been maintaining herself fairly well, despite not being dressed for lap swimming and having a body that was honed more through stretching than anything else. She made it to the other side of the pool to end her fourth lap, only to realize that her chest was bare, her bra floating 7 meters away. Lynne froze as she saw this, and placed her arms over her breasts, her face reddening as she contemplated what to do.

That is, until Maxine finished her fourth lap, her one piece securely tied around her frame.

Lynne: “Hey, um, Maxine, I know this is a race, but could you... get my top, please.”

Maxine’s eyes widened as she realized the situation and immediately shot off the wall of the pool to grab Lynne’s white bikini top, swimming back to her.

Maxine: “H-Here you go. S-Sorry about that.”

Lynne: “Sweetie, it’s nothing you did. I just don’t want to go swimming topless when there’s a... minor present.”

As Lynne tied her top back on, Jad rushed in, completing his sixth lap, stopping to comment on the situation.

Jad: “Well, *Barbara* clearly doesn’t mind. And... sorry about that Mom. Maybe you shouldn’t have worn that swimsuit.”

Lynne: “Oh, you think so, mister ‘don’t worry about it, you’ll be fine?’”

Lynne then rocketed off to finish the second half of her laps, while Maxine did the same.

Though she was comfortable in her frame, swimming was not one of Maxine’s strengths, and her form was the sloppiest of the bunch. She remained straight as she swam, but her motions were inefficient, resembling what a stroke should look like, without capturing the finer details of the form. This led her to lag behind her companions, but she remained close to the girl on her side.

Shiaka’s problems were an inverse of Maxine’s. She had the technique of a trained athlete and moved her arms and legs with minimal waste, yet she struggled with applying these details to her frame. She moved like a girl who underwent a growth spurt over winter break and was still learning how to deal with her breasts as they fluttered about on her small frame. The swimsuit itself didn’t help either, but at least she doubled-knotted it, in order to prevent any sort of *oppai*-related incident.

Despite Shiaka’s struggles, she was still ahead of Tyler. He wasn’t exhausted by the swimming, for his young body was frothing with *child energy*, but his body was his biggest inhibitor. Try as he might, he could not cover the same distance as others due to his growing frame, and while his technique was generally good, he kept twisting his body about slightly, despite being built like a plank.

By the time Tyler was finishing his sixth lap, Zoe was already on track to win. While his body had grown softer in the past few weeks, his strength, wingspan, and large feet aided him greatly, and

allowed him to easily take first place. It had always been one of the sports he impressed the most, and the swim team even tried to recruit him. However, he always pushed them aside, for he did not want to compromise his academics with any extracurriculars. After all, a 4.0 out of 4.0 GPA looks a lot better on an application than being on a varsity sports team. Or at least that's what his mother thought.

After he claimed the win, Zoe looked out at others, counting off their placement one by one. Zoe, Jad, Barbara, Lynne, Shiaka, Maxine, and lastly, Tyler.

Tyler: "Damn it! Puberty needs to *hurry the fuck up* and make me like 6 foot 3 or something, because this shortstack crap isn't working out."

Barbara: "Shortstack implies that you're a girl— or at least you have big tits— and you're under 160 cm. Like Shiaka. She's a *total* shortstack."

As Barbara spoke, she was in the midst of tying her bikini top back on.

Shiaka: "Thanks Barbara, I *really* want to be reminded of that after coming in *fifth*."

Maxine: "W-Well, you came in before me, so that's something and I'm... *ten* centimeters taller than you."

Lynne: "No offense Maxine, but I think that has to do with your technique more than. You should let Barb teach you sometime, while it's still warm out."

Barbara: "Hell yeah! Swimming lessons are a *kind* of education, so that fits in with your M.O."

Zoe: "So, um, about that muffin."

Shiaka: "*You* are not going to have any extra sweets, Xing! Not until you work on your form. Just for asking, give me 12 more laps! Make it 20 in total!"

Zoe: "But... swimming is not the best way for me to get toned, so—"

Shiaka: "We are at a *pool*, so you shall *swim*. When you are at the Oransen Community College *fitness center*, you can lift *weights*. And you *will*, because you want to be strong, *right?* In both *mind* and *body?*"

Zoe: "Y-Yes, ma'am!"

Shiaka: "I'm sorry, but would you care to *repeat* that? I thought you just said 'ma'am,' and I don't see any *ma'ams* in the vicinity."

Zoe: “Yes *miss*, of course, *miss*. I shall give you 12 more laps.”

Shiaka: “Actually, give me 16! No! 17! A *clean* 25. You look like you should be able to take it.”

Zoe: “I... *Heh*. No problem. See ya in 20-something minutes.”

After being ordered by his girlfriend, Zoe boosted off the wall and began his laps, skirting the edge of the pool while everybody else floated about.

Jad: “Damn, Shi-Shi. You’ve got that boy on a leash.”

Shiaka: “I don’t mean to, but he *needs* someone to push him back to his... former glory. He has gotten soft ever since we made it official, and as his GF, it’s my job to make him better.”

Maxine: “That doesn’t seem like the *healthiest* foundation for a relationship.”

Shiaka: “It depends on the guy and the girl, and I think we’re a *match made in heaven*.”

Lynne: “...I’m just going to stay out of this conversation.”

Barbara: “Why? You’re a divorced woman! Either you have the best advice for managing men, or the worst. It’s one of those great binaries.”

Lynne: “My advice is to divorce them once they start hitting you...”

Tyler: “There goes the tragedy lever...”

Barbara: “Yeah, um... who’s up for swimming more laps? I feel kinda bad watching Zoe work himself like a dog while we’re floating on our asses.”

Jad: “Yeah, I’m down for that. But no more racing. I for one enjoyed my lunch and would rather not make a mess in the pool.”

Barbara: “Heh. Thanks for looking out for the housekeeper, J Dilla. So, if everyone’s ready, on your marks, get—”

Tyler: “GO!”

As Tyler shouted, he shot himself forward from the wall, swimming about as well as he could, but not moving very fast at all.

The remaining five soon raced after Tyler, and kicked off what would be an afternoon of impromptu water sports. Mock noodle fights, butt fights on body boards, a few jolly old rounds of chicken, but the set piece and final event of the afternoon was the water volleyball tournament.

Four against three. Boys versus girls. Men X women. It... *should* have been an intense battle of dominance as they spiked the ball beyond the floating net. However, by the time the fighting began, Zoe was exhausted from all of his penalty laps, and Tyler could barely spike to save his hide.

As the tournament ended with a landslide victory, the kids all chilled in the pool, tiredly floating about, sipping on cool cans of flavored sparkling water, while the women laid on their lounge chairs. Lynne had her sunglasses on her forehead as she read her book, a glass of red wine on the table beside her. While Barbara sat in the shade, a tablet in hand, a big grin on her face, and a vodka soda with lime resting between her thighs.

As Maxine looked to the awning from the pool, she saw that it was 17:30. While there were another two hours of sun, she had enough social literacy to tell that people were winding down, and it was time for everyone to head home and enjoy their Saturday night. She pulled herself up the ladder, her hands and toes pruned from a day of swimming, and walked up to Barbara while squeezing the water out of her hair.

Maxine: “Um, Barbara, don’t you think that it’s about time for us to wrap things up?”

Barbara: “Huh? Oh, sure. I was just waiting for you kids to tucker yourselves out, and... you’re drinking in the pool, so I think it’s that time.”

Maxine: “They’re just carbonated waters. Not beer or anything.”

Barbara: “You know you can *legally* drink now. They lowered the age to 18 a few years back. Nobody can stop you from hitting up Binny’s, grabbing two cases, and keeping the party going. I sure as saccharin won’t say nothin’. Well, unless your bro-bro gets involved.”

Maxine: “How about... no. We just want to go home, and as the host, isn’t it your duty to call things off?”

Barbara: “Eh... I guess so. Fine, fine. Let me just finish this chapter up.”

Maxine: “Oh, what are you reading?”

Barbara: “An ero comic called *Emergence*. It’s dark as shit, but surprisingly poignant and beautifully illustrated. I never heard of this ‘Shindol’ person, but they’re the kind of talent you can only find in hentai.”

Maxine: “If there’s anyone who’d know, it’s you, Barbara.”

Barbara: “Oh, you sweet babe swaddled in a cashmere blanket of *ignorance*. The hentai hole goes deeper than any orifice on any human. *Including the intestines*. I’m *apples deep* compared to some of these people.”

Maxine: “...I’m going to start putting things away now.”

Barbara: “Thanks, oatmeal muffin. I’ll be done in just a minute.”

As Barbara took a sip of her drink, Maxine began putting away the noodles, floats, and rideable inflatable shark. Her friends quickly took notice and proceeded to get out of the pool, drying themselves off on the embroidered ‘Flare’ towels. Only once they were halfway done drying themselves did Barbara rise from her chair and shout across the yard.

Barbara: “Alright kids, party’s over. I hate to say it, but this is probably the last Flare pool party of the season. ...Well, unless you want to do another for Labor Day or something. As always, great seeing you, hit up the usual showers before you go, come over anytime, yada yada, you know the drill.”

As the declaration was made, the four guests began to clean up what they could, gather their things, hit the showers, and change into the clothes they brought along with their swimwear. Once their bodies were rinsed of chlorine and presentable to all establishments, they said their goodbyes. The girls gave their hugs, the boys too, but in a more ‘macho’ manner, and, with a smile on their faces, Jad, Lynne, Zoe, and Shiaka took their leave. This left Barbara, Maxine, and Tyler alone, and after giving their backyard a final glance over, they made their way into their luxurious home.

While this marked the end of the pool party, the night was young, a new *session* had begun, and things were about to get at least a little... *extra*.

Session Extra.2: Inheritance



The cool summer breeze flowed through the short brown hairs covering my arms and legs. I shoved my hands into my shorts pockets as my body shivered, and I looked over at Lynne. With her hair still wet, hairless legs exposed, and sandals covering her feet, I easily imagine how chilly she must have been.

Her outfit didn't help all too much, as she was in a green tank top, jean capris, and those heeled sandals. It was an outfit that I used to wear the past few summers. But now, I was in an indigo polo and khaki shorts. Shorts with *massive* pockets that I wasted little time digging through before pulling out my phone and checking my weather app.

"It's 18 degrees outside and the wind's at 10 km," I said with a snicker.

"Seriously? They said the low was going to be 20," Mom replied, a bitterness in her voice.

"Well, we've only got two more blocks to go and then we can warm up."

"Oh... right. ...I should make us some tea when we get home. Have you decided on your *usual* yet?"

"Just black's fine, Mom. I don't like the fruity stuff as much as I thought I would."

“You know, your palette’s never going to change unless you experiment a little.”

“*Fine*, throw in some of that nutmeg you like.”

“Hmm... I should think about getting some new tea. I know which ones I *liked*, but if I’m having two cups a day, I should throw in some more variety.”

As Lynne made that comment, she pulled her phone out of the backpack and began ‘swipe typing’ away at her notes app before placing her phone between her boobs.

“Real classy, Mom.”

“Oh, *grow up*. I’ve seen women in their *fifties* do the same damn thing. This wouldn’t be a problem if it wasn’t so hard to find good pockets, but I know you’ve heard that enough from Maxine over the years.”

“You could always bust out the sewing kit and extend your pockets?”

“It... has been a *long time* since I last sewed, and doing it for every pocket seems excessive. Besides, most of the time I have my purse. I just didn’t feel the need to bring it with me today.”

She was acting defensive— a bit antsy— I thought it was weird at first, but then I remembered that’s how *she* always was when *she* got cold, so this was nothing new. Still, seeing her fall into these quirks brought a smile to my face, and it lasted until we arrived at our home.

I made my way to my room, throwing myself onto my bed and pulling out my phone, checking up on whatever I missed while at the pool party. The world had gotten a lot more complicated since I was this age, since I moved into this house, and sometimes it was staggering the sheer volume of information that modern teens had to keep up with. And as a modern teen, I had an obligation to keep up with trends. It was good for socializing, and quintessential to make the most of my college experience. ...Not that I would get much of a true ‘college experience’ unless I moved out.

Part of me knew Lynne would let me move out. That she would encourage me to make the most of my life. And I know she would be okay on her own. She was still coming to grips with things, and had to keep a notebook to track what I had in my head, but she was making quick progress, and falling into her role quickly. It’s why I went straight to my bedroom. Because she didn’t need me as much as she did two months ago.

I enjoyed doing those things because they made me feel valued and appreciated, and I guess Lynne learned that herself. It’s why she volunteered to give me tea and why she comes in with a

plate of veggies once a day. She found what drove me and made it her own. While I... took a different path.

As I identified something to talk about during dinner, I heard a knock on my door.

“Come in,” I said, still laying on my bed.

Lynne walked in, her hair still wet, and a smile on her face.

“Just wanted to let you know that the tea— and dinner— are ready.”

I paused and looked at my clock, which said it was already a quarter past 18.

“Oh. *Heh*. Time flies when you get sucked in.”

While I wasn’t *that* hungry— because I had three courses of meat for lunch— I had enough experience to know that if I didn’t have dinner now, I’d just be hungry an hour later. And with this stomach, I could *always* make room, and I didn’t need to worry about putting on a pound.

I got out of bed and walked with Lynne to the kitchen. We had a dining area, but when we had meals together, we just used the little end table pushed up against the kitchen wall. A table with our teas, still steaming hot, bags already removed, and dinner. It was leftover schnitzel and paella from earlier in the week, along with broccoli and cauliflower that she made in the multicooker. Nothing too fancy, and it was a bit of an odd combo, but I served weirder things when trying to clean out the fridge.

Digging in, I was reminded of how far Lynne came since we started our cooking lessons in January. It didn’t taste *quite* as good as when I made it, even when accounting for my new taste buds. But she was making strides, and I could tell she was enjoying the act of cooking, even with how she seasoned the vegetables to complement the rest of the meal.

I watched her as I ate, sipping her pomegranate lemon tea, clasping her cup with her limber fingers, nails painted a faint lavender, finishing it before touching her meal. I found myself analyzing her, as if I was conducting a performance review to see how well she captured being Caroline Steticks, and... she definitely passed. While there was a slight brashness to her movements... nobody who looked at her would have the slightest inclination that she was not who she appeared to be. A beautiful 35-year-old woman.

She had captured me so elegantly and quickly, while I... didn’t do the same.

I stopped halfway through my meal and drank the rest of my tea before slamming my mug against the table, making a noise that echoed through the kitchen. Lynne picked up on my lack of subtlety and immediately went into ‘mom mode.’

“Jad, what’s wrong?”

“I... I just feel like I need to say I’m sorry.”

“For what? I told you I don’t need your help with dinner anymore. I’m a big girl and I can take care of meal prep *all by myself*. ...Though, I won’t say no if you want to help me chop veggies.”

“Lynne, you know *what*. I... I took your life and ran with it. I stopped taking HRT, started acting more like a guy than you ever did and—”

“Jad, it’s okay. That body... never suited me anyway. As strange as it is to say, but I feel more comfortable in your skin than I think I ever did in my own. If anything, I feel bad about putting you through this.”

“Is that why you’re acting so much like me? Why you’ve taken on the role of a mother with a smile on your face?”

Lynne paused for a moment before responding

“Well, I think there was *some* of that at first, but the more I tried living like this, the more I... liked it. I know it might be hard to believe Jad, but I like being your mom. It’s fun seeing things from the other side like this, and... it just feels like everything’s already there for me. I might have lost 17 years of my life, but I also do not need to worry about *so many things*. I don’t need to worry about school, finding a job, maintaining a career, making money, or worrying about my future. I don’t need to go through my own gender transition and several intensive surgeries. I’m a homeowner, I have a son I love very much, and just knowing that all of these life goals are already accomplished... It makes me happy.”

She told me this many times, but... never quite so succinctly.

“When you put it like that, you got off easy, huh? I need to work for a living and deal with all of that crap. Though, I’d be lying if I said this wasn’t a dream come true for me. I love you, Lynne, but when I had you at 16, my life had to stop. Taking care of you and Bryce became my world, and that’s part of the reason why I... did not appreciate my life as much as I should have. I thought about starting over during my darkest moments but now... I don’t have to. I didn’t ever necessarily want to be a *guy*, but it seemed... interesting to me after I got to experiment with the VD. And now, 76 days into a man’s life... I’ve taken a liking to it.”

“I’d give you shit for *technically* detransitioning my body, but I understand. The process of transitioning is hard, long, and tiresome. You stopped HRT as an experiment, to try things out on the other side, and... now you’re a man.”

I felt something swell up inside me as she called me a man. I guess that just meant it was true.

“When you really think about it, I guess that means we’re both trans,” I said half-jokingly

“Heh. I guess so. You ‘transitioned’ by *detransitioning*.”

“Yeah, that doesn’t sound quite right. I was never the best with all this terminology, but—”

“No, it does sound silly, Jad. It’s something that only makes sense in a world where body swapping exists... or *existed* I suppose.”

“Yeah... me and the rest of the parents got up to some *weird shit* during spring break, and I’m going to miss that.”

“Do I even want to know?”

“Short version is that it was an orgy, and we forgot who was who a few drinks in. I’m pretty sure I had sex with—”

“Okay, *Son*. Let’s stop using *the past possessives*. We stopped using them for a reason.”

I chuckled at her request, before giving her precisely what she asked for.

“Okay, *Mom*. Would you rather I tell you about how *Barbara* was in *your body* and how you fucked her while inside Daisuke’s?”

“I... will ask you for the details later.”

As Lynne blushed at the eroticism of the concept I just offered, I realized our plates were both empty.

“I’ll handle the dishes, Mom. You do... whatever you wanna do.”

Lynne then scampered off, leaving me with a single load of dishes. Normally, we had more, thanks to water bottles and tupperware, but tonight was a lighter load, and it only took me about 5 minutes. Next, I just had to find out where Lynn went.

While I liked this home, it was *too damn big* for just two people. There was the living room, dining room, den, kitchen, basement, three upstairs bedrooms, and the ground floor laundry room we had built out during our vacation in Europe. You could *easily* fit a family of five in this house, even six. I actually thought about renting a room out... *back when I owned it*, but I was never sure if roommates would be worth the hassle. Well, unless they were good kids. Like Gem, Anita, or Vivi.

Regardless, I was able to find Lynne pretty quickly, as she was in the den. A room that we turned into an entertainment lounge last month, bringing in a couch, TV, and some furnishings, so that all of our video game stuff could be put in there, and not in my room. This included the consoles, games, and the desktop PC. Lynne already had a laptop, and I traded out the desktop in my room for something portable for college. It was certainly a better alternative to schlepping around 7 kilograms of textbooks every day.

Musings aside, I opened up the entertainment lounge and saw Lynne on the couch, controller in hand, headphones on her head, sitting cross-legged. I threw myself onto the couch next to her as she played and peered at the screen for a moment, trying to remember the name of the game she was playing.

Growing up, I played video games at my friends' houses from time to time, but they were never something I got too invested in. My parents weren't wealthy, and weren't going to drop money on a Nintendo or even an Atari, let alone buy games for it. Hell, we didn't even get a VCR until 1992. But when Lynne was a little kid, she started asking for video games all the time, and, like *a good mother*, I bought her what she wanted. A GameBoy Advance in 2001, a GameCube in 2002, PS2 in 2004, Nintendo DS in 2006—the list goes on.

When she was a kid, I tried to enjoy games with her, helping her grasp the basics based on what little experience I had, and playing alongside her. It was a social thing for us... until she started hanging out with Maxxie— er, rather, *Barbara*. Video games were a huge part that brought them together and Lynne stopped playing with her mom. Although, I did occasionally check out some of her games when I was lounging around the house, thinking they would help me understand her better. Well, that's what I told myself, but they were also just plain old fun.

But after things were getting worse around Bryce and Lynne brought her game consoles into her room, I more or less stopped playing them, and hadn't tried getting back into them until December 2014. We spent a day in each other's bodies, living each other's lives to the best of our abilities. And part of living this life involved playing *Super Smash Bros. for Wii U*, which... I still can't believe that's the actual title for a video game that has sold *millions* of copies.

She later gave me her... *original* Nintendo 3DS after she got a *capital-N* New Nintendo 3DS XL in February, and let's just say it *significantly* cut into my reading time. Video games started becoming a usual talking point during our dinners together and, once we settled into our new bodies, it became something of a shared activity for us.

She was naturally way better and more knowledgeable than me, because she spent a decade plus memorizing this stuff, but I enjoyed seeing her go on her rambles. Eagerly showing me certain games, telling me about the history of the medium, and showing me the reasons why she personally fell in love with it. Sometimes she played while I watched along. Other times I did

it by myself before she poked her head in to give me some pointers. And we even did the occasional 'mother and son' livestream.

Video games became a leisurely activity that brought us together, and one that made me feel more... *appropriate* in my role as a son. I mean, sure, people of all ages and genders play video games, but when you're a *young man*, such as myself, people kind of expect you to be into video games.

Oh God. Did I seriously go on *such* a long and detailed ramble? I guess I really am living up to my title as *Jad*...

Personal history lesson aside, I eventually realized that Lynne was playing *The Witcher 3: The Wild Hunt*. A tentpole 'game of the year' contender that put our PC through the ringer, and it certainly showed with its lushly detailed forest landscapes and overall level of detail. However, it was also one of those 'go with the flow' sort of games, where there was a main storyline to follow, but a whole world to explore. A world full of 'micro-stories' that often featured more unique or interesting elements than the 'main plot.' It was a type of narrative design unique to the bold frontier for storytelling that was the medium of video games.

As someone who used to go through about 30 novels a year, I had a certain love of storytelling, and seeing something like this that could not be done in a more linear piece of fiction deeply captivated me. That, and its more playful elements were just so... endearing. Such as the current 'questline' that Lynne was on, which involved her giving some ingredients to a witch who used magic to turn mice into horses. Despite being a game with no shortage of more mature subject matter, it still had the confidence to be silly, and I appreciated that.

We sat there for a little over two hours, talking, playing, all while Lynne analyzed the game, pointing out reasons why it is so great, and also making a few, mostly petty, criticisms. As per usual, she occasionally handed me the controller, so I could better understand what the game was trying to do. I enjoyed steering conversations and exploring the world, searching for 'goodies,' but the combat felt... strange. It felt more like I was telling the player character to attack instead of actually controlling their attacks, and I was still trying to understand how the magic system worked. But I'd chock that up to me still being a bit of a 'newbie' when it comes to these things.

As the hours passed and the clock below the TV read 21:20, Lynne got up and did a quick stretch.

"I think that's enough gaming for me tonight. I'm going to get ready for bed, and do try to go to sleep before midnight. You need to get on a better schedule."

I groaned as she made such a 'mom' comment. Though it was true that I have stayed up until one in the morning some nights. Mostly because I was scrolling through shit on my phone,

trying to get caught up on what ‘kids like me’ were like, or freshening up on school stuff I forgot over the past 16 or so years. What can I say? Being a college kid took a lot of research if you’ve been out of the game for as long as I’ve been.

Meanwhile, Lynne had the internal clock of a mother and housewife. Her body was trained to get up at 6 so that she could get her son’s breakfast and lunch ready. And while she could have broken that trend now that her son’s out of high school, she didn’t.

“Yeah, yeah. I’ll be in bed by 23 if it’ll make you happy,” I said with a smirk on my face.

“School’s starting soon, and I don’t want you to be late for classes because you felt like sleeping in until 10. ...Speaking of which, what was your final class schedule again?”

“Um... three classes on Monday and Wednesday, 11:30 to 15:35. English Composition, Finite Math, and Western Civilization Since 1650. With Introduction To Sociology on Tuesday, 9:30 to 12:20.”

“Look at you, ya little planning wiz, you got yourself a 4-day weekend!”

Lynne ruffled my hair as she complimented me. It was something I used to do when our roles were reversed and... it *a/ways* felt better than I expected.

“Yeah, well, I could have jumped up to 15 credit hours, but—”

“But I told you *no*. That you needed to adapt to college life. Besides, you could always catch up with a summer class in 2016.”

“Or I could just take five years to finish college.”

“That too. Whatever floats your boat, Jad.”

With that, Lynne began walking out of the repurposed den and upstairs to her room. I watched her as she left, lightly sashaying her hips as her capris wrapped around her figure. It was... something I developed into muscle memory when I was living with Bryce. Because it’s what he wanted. Even after he left my life, this gesture became a part of the old me, and now... a part of Lynne.

While I had a vast game library before me, I felt the need to wind down a little. So I headed up to my room, plopped on some headphones, and picked up where I was at in *Neuromancer*. Genre fiction like this was never really *my* forte, but it was something that caught my eye when we went to a used bookstore last month, if only for its ominous cover and the praise along its back. That, and it seemed like something a teenage boy would have flopping around in his backpack.

The novel's dystopic future was simultaneously captivating, poignant, and quaint with its technological inaccuracies and disproportionate developments. While my musical selection, a playlist of the non-vocal songs by the 80s Japanese electronic group, Yellow Magic Orchestra, served as a strangely fitting backing track.

It was not something that I listened to in my past life, but rather an artifact found when Lynne and I merged our music libraries shortly after the swap. While we wanted to live as our new selves, music is deeply personal, so we did not want to abandon our old favorites. ...But we also felt that we needed to diversify our tastes to better fit our new bodies. So merging them, copying them, and subsequently curating them seemed like the best approach.

Listening to so much music proved to be an... interesting experience for me. One that made me question the adage that one stops looking or enjoying new music after they enter their thirties. We both were listening to a lot of new things, and enjoying them even with my 35-year-old mind, and her 35-year-old body. Was this due to a discrepancy between the mind and the body, or was this just something that affected a select group of people, and not everyone. ...Probably the latter.

As the clock reached 22:00, I asked myself if I should try to turn in early. With my body *just* starting to feel sore from all the swimming earlier today, I decided that turning in early wouldn't be the worst thing. Besides, as an 18-year-old, I was supposed to get up to ten hours of sleep a night, right?

I hit up the bathroom, brushing my teeth, washing my face, taking a nice hard look at my bright green eyes and handsome features, before *finally* taking a piss. It was something I had developed an almost childlike excitement around. No longer was I bound by the constraints of sitting to pee, now I could just whip it out, take aim, and let it all flow out as I stood by. I would say it was relaxing... but I made messes a bit too often to ever be fully relaxed when taking a wiz.

My penis wasn't anything special. It was a *slightly below average* five inches, but it fit nicely into my hand and got the job done. Dicks always seemed odd and mysterious from an outside perspective, but with one in my control... it's almost like a *toy*. When your thoughts take a turn for the sexy, it gets hard, and when it gets hard, you just stroke while the good vibes fill your being before *BAM!* It fires in spurts, sending waves of happy juices from your bottom *head* and through your top head. Sure, there was less of a buildup and more of a cooldown, but... I understood why guys liked thinking with their dicks. Because it felt good and made you feel cool!

With my dick hard and poking through my shorts, I left the bathroom, contemplating if I should jerk off before going to bed. Before making that decision however, I felt the need to check in on Lynne and wish her goodnight... or tell her to put her book down and get some sleep. As I

approached the door, I heard her voice, slid open the door just a smidgen, and saw her in her lavender nightie, her hand between her legs and her face red. I felt my briefs get a little tighter and, one second later, I knocked on the door.

“Need help with something?” I asked, my tone almost *insufferably* cocky.

Five seconds passed before she responded.

“*I think I do...* come on in, *Jad*,” she said, her voice sultry and longing.

I saw Lynne on the bed, presenting her body to me. Her nightie covered her in an opaque fabric, but the curves of her body were plain as day, and her slender legs guided me all the way to her painted toenails.

She stared at me with her shimmering blue eyes, shot me a toothy grin, and angled her chest to give me a generous view of her cleavage. Her loose blonde hair fluttered slightly from the summer’s breeze coming in from the open window, and she casually curled two fingers back, beckoning me to join her in bed. She was hot. She knew it. She loved it. And... I loved it too.

I closed the door behind me and began to strip out of my clothes, pulling off my shirt and shorts to reveal my lean body, my arms and legs lightly covered in dark hairs. As Lynne looked at me, I saw her eyes trending downward. Not at what I had in my briefs, but at the small wads of fat I had hanging from my chest, and my enlarged nipples. A remnant from HRT that would diminish over time, but never *go away* without surgery. They looked slightly ajar on my male frame. Noticeable, but not necessarily large enough to look ‘wrong’ or explicitly ‘female.’ I mean, shit, Bryce had bigger tits once he stopped working out.

However, as Lynne looked over at me, her composed and eager disposition faltered. She contracted her spread out form, pushing her necks under her body and crossing her arms over her chest. She turned around, looking out an open window before letting out a sigh and asking me a question.

“Should we... really keep doing this? You’re my son, I’m your mother and...”

I sighed as my mind flashed back to how this predicament began.

Before discovering the VD, both of us were... not the biggest fans of sex. Lynne was always asexual. She would always freak out about nudity, even as a kid. She thought that private parts should be private and was uncomfortable with seeing anyone else's. For me? Well, to me, sex was directly associated with Bryce. He took my virginity, I made love to him to show my appreciation for all he did for me, and I provided him with sex when he became demanding. It

was something I enjoyed but... learned to hate as he lost the tenderness of a lover and became *bestial*.

When we divorced, my interest in sex died, and I went without sexual pleasure for over three years... until New Year's 2015. After that, I became part of our little 'adult swap club.' My former self, Kenneth, Eleanore, Daisuke, Paz, 'Barbara,' and Natasha. I enjoyed it. The liquor, surreality, and casual peer pressure made things exciting. There was an inherent eroticism to having a different body, different senses, and different parts, albeit in a subtle way.

My sexual identity at that time was strange. It felt like I was playing around, trying things out, and once it was over, I would be as disinterested in sex as I was back when I began the divorce proceedings. That changed when I stopped being Caroline and started being Jad. We gave ourselves freedom to make these bodies our own, for there was no way back to 'normal.' I waited a week before I tried anything, dealing with it getting hard as I thought about any number of things. Guys, girls, whatever. Sometimes, it seemed to have a mind of its own.

After a week of this, I rediscovered sexual pleasure. I quickly made it a daily habit, going once, twice, even thrice, as I experimented with where my newly rebooted sexuality lied. But then, like so many teenage boys, I got caught. On June 23, Mom walked in on me with my dick in my hand, shorts around my knees, sex on my screen, and moaning in my ears. The volume was too high, I didn't hear her knock, and I felt part of me die from embarrassment at that moment.

She looked at me with an equal amount of shock at first, before she gave me a slightly forced smile, telling me that dinner was ready. At dinner, Lynne said she was glad I was enjoying myself, reinforced how masturbation was healthy... even though *jacking* it was never her thing.

I still felt bad and didn't think I could sleep without apologizing to her. So, at a quarter to 22, I walked up to her bedroom, and heard the sounds of moaning from the door. The sounds I used to make to appease Bryce. I don't know what compelled me to open up that door and peek inside, but I saw Lynne, one hand between her legs, another on her breasts, her face red and elated.

I tried to go to sleep after that, but I couldn't. The sight of her, of what used to be my body, in that state of erotic bliss, it drove my penis wild, and I had to *appease the beast*. The following day, I once again masturbated while thinking of Lynne. At the fantasy of her soliciting me. Of me soliciting her. Of her assaulting me. Of me assaulting her. Even when I tried to use normal porn to satiate me, these thoughts popped in.

I managed to quit masturbating a week ahead of our European vacation, from July 11 to July 25. I had always wanted to visit Europe. To see the world beyond Washington and Illinois, and to go on a vacation with my favorite person in the world. We had a wonderful time during our first few days, traveling mostly in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland on account of Lynne's high school German. Not that we really needed, as *everybody* spoke English.

However, when we were in Cologne, we decided to have some beers with our dinner, as was the local custom. At least, that's what the *ridiculously hot* waiter said. Lynne's body hadn't seen a drink since 2013, my body had never tasted a drop of alcohol. So, after three beers, we were *drunk as shit*. I don't even know how we got back to our hotel, but once we were there, I remember seeing her strip, her movements sloppy and exaggerated.

As she laid there, pleasuring herself, I had to force myself to look away. Force myself to ignore the burning sensations coursing through my dick. I thought she would ignore me and get off, but instead she shoved my face into her boobs, hugging me as tightly as a drunk woman could. I told her to stop or else I'd wind up fucking her. And she... she told me to go for it.

"Fick mich, Jad."

You didn't need to know much German to make sense of that and... I did it. I fucked the person who was once my daughter and became my mother. It was clumsy, disorientating, and messy as all hell. But I still remember the rush of euphoria that ran through my being as our lips met, as our nipples brushed against each other, and as I locked into her.

We woke up at 9, our heads aching and our bodies covered in dry sweat and the remnants of cum. She looked at me, I looked at her, and we realized what we had done. She started crying. Crying about how she was a terrible mother, how she was nothing but a perverted freak, how she was a monster, and how she ruined my dream vacation.

"Lynne," I began, clasping her shoulder, "you didn't ruin anything. If anything, you... you brought a fantasy of mine to life."

She looked up at me with tear-stained eyes, an incredulous look on her face.

"On June 23rd, when you caught me masturbating, I went into your bedroom at around 22:00. I just wanted to apologize again but, as I opened the door, I saw you... jilling off. I shut the door, went back to my bedroom and... masturbated. To you. To the idea of us being together."

"I... On June 23rd, I was masturbating while thinking of *you*. Seeing you fap, enjoying yourself, embracing your inner maleness with such joy on your face... it set something off within me. I tried to sleep that night, but I kept thinking about it and..."

"So, we both masturbated to each other?" I said, progressing the conversation.

"We both did but... that doesn't make it right. That doesn't mean it was okay for us to actually *fuck* each other. We're family, we shouldn't—"

"Why?" I asked, grabbing her shoulders.

“Because it’s incest, Jad! It—”

“And what are the reasons why ‘incest is bad?’”

“B-Because it’s an abuse of power and relationships are—”

“Lynne, we both wear the scars of abuse, we know what it is like to be around an abuser, and we *never* want to hurt each other, do we?”

“No, you’re... the only family I have, and the very idea of hurting you in any way... *disgusts me.*”

“Reason number two, whatever it is, can probably be thrown away because of how *fucked* our situation is. Mother became son, daughter became mother, and depending on how you look at it, just by living, masturbating, or making these bodies our own, we are *abusing* them. We both felt that way at first, but now... I think we’ve started making these bodies our own. Do you agree?”

“...I do,” Lynne replied, her brow furrowed as she thought. “*This* is my body. *That* was my body but... *this* will be my body for the rest of my life. Eventually, I will have been Lynne for longer than I have been anyone else and, in doing so, I am stealing something from you—”

“And I am stealing something from you,” I said sitting next to her.

She looked at me with a small smile, before looking down at her hands, thinking of what reason number three could be. But, like a jerk, I spoke before she could.

“And no, we are *never* going to try having a kid—”

“W-What? Oh, *God*. I didn’t even think about that. I’m... not ready to have a *second* child... or be a *grandmother*.”

Lynne then stood up, poured a glass of water, dug through her suitcase, and plopped a tiny white pill into her mouth before drinking the entire glass.

“...Did you bring *morning-after pills*?” I asked.

“Barbara recommended it. She was worried that ‘a pretty lady like me’ might get raped, so I bought some before the trip. Never thought *I’d* be the one to initiate sex... or that it would be with my own *son*.”

From there, I just laughed at how mature and thoughtful she was— how she was thinking like a 35-year-old woman— and the humor was not lost on her.

We felt we needed some time to digest what we had discussed and went our separate ways as we explored the city. We reunited for dinner eight hours later and did not say a word about what happened this morning... until we went back to the hotel room. Once there, Lynne placed a hand on me and asked if I wanted to try again. This time sober, and this time with more consent. I said yes.

After we took a moment to reflect on the past, we looked up at each other. Lynne in her nightie, me in my briefs. As she looked me over, she repeated her thought from before.

“You’re my son, I’m your mother, and...”

“If it feels so good, and nobody gets hurt, then it can’t be wrong?”

“*Heh*. Something like that. So, are you ready for round ten?”

“Are you seriously going to keep count?”

“Eh, sure, why not? I’m already keeping tallies of how often I masturbate... aren’t you?”

“Um, no? Is that something I should do?”

“It’s something that Barbara told me that most people do. But in retrospect, she was probably just messing with me. So, are you ready?”

I slid out of my briefs and threw them into the laundry basket before grabbing a condom from a dresser drawer, putting it on while Lynne undressed herself. She hung up her nightie in her wardrobe before sliding down her panties, flinging them toward the basket, where they landed dead center.

She made a triumphant fist pump as she landed a target on the other side of the room, her breasts shaking as she did so. I gave her a light clap, recognizing her feat, as she returned to bed, adopting the pose she had when I first came into the room.

“I’m a little tired, so... I’ll let *you* lead this time, Jad.”

“With pleasure, Lynne.”

Having spent 35 years in her body, having fucked *thousands* of times in that body, Lynne was still years away from knowing it as well as I did. But, as always, I intended to show her the *finer features* of her body, the small little spots that always felt *so good*.

I began by bringing my lips to hers, our tongues touching, circling around one another, while our bodies pressed closer. Arms swung over our backs. Nipples rubbed against each other. And as I felt my dick brush up against her dampened crotch, I pulled my rear back and took aim. She pulled her lips away from mine as I entered her, her eyes wide and her breathing heavy.

As I began to set a rhythm for her to follow, pulling myself in and out, to and fro, she brought her hands to my chest and, with the ends of her nails, began to pinch my nipples. A shock went through my body as a smile grew on her face.

“So, how do they feel? Are they still *tender*?”

“They are... and I like it. I like it a lot.”

Before I could bring my mouth to her nipples, she leaped up to mine, brushing her tongue against my supple breasts and using her teeth to pinch them. Though not *quite* as sensitive as they were back in June, they still housed a cluster of nerves and having them pleased so thoroughly... just made me go faster and harder.

The thing I *loved* about having a dick was how it doubled as a tool. A tool for both giving and receiving pleasure. All it took was the right angle, the right amount of force, and the right knowledge of your partner. If you had all three, you could lock them in a state of *purest pleasure*. It was something that I had experienced... *long ago*. But now, I was on the other end, looking down at a pair of blue eyes that glistened with every thrust I made, and a face that twitched whenever I found an ‘extra sensitive’ spot.

Once the well-trodden groove was rediscovered, it did not take long for Lynne to discharge the first time, and even less time for the second and third. Once she was *floating*, I began to focus on myself. I had been holding back as my nipples were titillated, but as she switched her mouth to the other side, biting down on it slightly, I lost my resolve. Our eyes locked as I felt my penis pulsate inside her, the condom filling up with my semen, and her breathing growing heavy as the condom expanded within her. She brought her arms around my back, urging me to stay until I was done. Once I was, she brought her head down to her pillow, and I pulled out of her.

As I removed my condom, I took a brief look into the condom itself and saw that its semen was still faint and cloudy. HRT had lowered my body’s sperm production, and it would still be a few weeks, maybe months, before it recovered. In that sense, the condoms were unnecessary. But I didn’t want to force Lynne to use birth control, as it always made her feel bloated.

After tying it off my condom and flinging it into the waste bin, I laid back into the bed with Lynne, who wasted little time kissing me and bringing a hand to my chest.

"You know," Lynne began, "I never did end up playing with *these things* myself. Or with *that thing* either. I know I had my reservations, but... I really should have fucked once just so I would better know what it's like on your end, sweetie."

"Lynne, I'm a guy. You don't need to worry about 'pleasing me.' So long as I can wrap my dick in something tight and warm, I'm good."

"You didn't mention wet."

"Wetness helps, but it's not a requirement. Barbara told me to use those fold and close sandwich baggies, the ones without a zipper— to masturbate. Honestly, I don't even know how the 'lotion and tissues' method is supposed to work."

"Me neither... Anyway, I tried masturbating in other girls' bodies. Maxine, Shiaka, and Barbara. But I still have a certain sense of... maybe not regret, but wonder about what could have been to have sex with a penis."

"If you could've, who would you have fucked? Maxxie?"

"We said we would stop using our *old names*... Most likely, yes. She would have been *elated* even if there was no body swapping involved."

"Really? When did you figure this out?"

"Um... March, I guess. I realized that a girl doesn't ask someone to masturbate unless she wants to fuck them. However... I just could never get comfortable with it. Now that I am not as sexually... repressed, I think I would enjoy having a penis for a night. Alas, that is a mere fantasy. With no way to swap, there is no way for me to experience what it is like to penetrate someone."

"Um, Lynne, you know they have sex toys to help with that, right? Barbara's got a \$200 double-ended strap-ons and it feels *really* nice. It was a prop in one of those adult swap parties you 'just can't seem to remember.' But I do remember *you* mentioning how much *you* loved it."

Lynne scoffed at my comment before replying.

"Well, if I loved it, then I'm sure we would love it, Son... but are you okay with having your mother fuck your ass?"

"Sure, why not? It'll be a fun bonding experience for the two of us, and I've been curious about 'prostate orgasms' anyway."

As we laughed about our absurd situation and relationship, I turned off the light, shut the window, and joined Lynne under the covers. She was on her side, facing away from me, and while I could have just taken the other end of the bed, I nudged closer to her. I moved until my chest was an inch away from her back, our bent legs were parallel, my arms were around her stomach, and my crotch was right against her butt. I was still feeling a little frisky, so I couldn't help but get a boner in this position, entering Lynne's butt *ever so slightly*, to which she laughed, turning her head around.

"Sorry honey, but no round two tonight. I've got a *lot* of cooking tomorrow."

"If that's the case, then I'll help out with the chopping."

"I said you didn't need—"

"I *want* to. And for no real reason other than... I love ya, Mom."

As she let out a small laugh, I planted three tiny kisses on her neck.

From there, things grew quiet. The darkness settled in, my eyes began to drop, and our breathing synchronized.

For as bizarre as things have been this summer, for as unusual as our relationship was, I was... happy with how things turned out. I was happy as Jad. She was happy as Lynne. We had bright futures ahead of us. So, in the end... I think this proved to be a *pleasant flip*.

Session Extra.3: Resonance



Of all the investments that Ken and Ellie made into this house, the absolute *best* one was the \$3,000 dishwasher, because *screw* doing dishes by hand! All it does is *bonk* up your wrists and *incinerate* so much *goldarn* time it ain't even funny. Back in *the halcyon days*, I didn't need to worry about this shaz, but now that I'm in charge of this place, I gotta appreciate the little things.

As I loaded this sucker up, I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the *shimmering shiny* metal. I scoped some lady with skin light brown, hair black and ponytail'd, *tig-bass-itties* wrapped up in nothin' but some black polyester patches, and a *great ass* out of range. A.K.A. M.E. Miss Excellence. Barbara Ophelia Pequot. *The B.O.P.* To the untrained eye, it would look as if utterly nothing was wrong. Just the caretaker of the Flare family doing her job of takin' care of business, bullshit, and *bid-nass* while the two precious children did their own thing. They'd be *dead* right... but *deader* wrong.

Now, seeing as how I wasn't *supposed* to do my job in an itty bitsy bikini, I shut the dishwasher and did what I had to do to get 'decent.' Meaning it was time to get *wet*, *wild*, and *fierce* with some *fresh threads*. Not gonna lie, showering was something I've been *stoked* on ever since I got my mitts on the VD. Seeing all the little nooks and crannies of another person's... person was always a blast. I was fixing to see as many people naked as I could, but one of my most *desired* targets was none other than the woman I saw staring back at me in the mirror. A woman formerly known as Babs... until I reclaimed *my* birth name.

Why did I want to swap with her? To me, the reason was obvious as dirt. I remember saying that Babs was beautiful back when I was a 3-year-old proto-Maxxie. She's *always* been a hot lady. Since she was a teenager, since she was in her twenties, and now, with her body looking back at me in the mirror, I'd say she looked *fine as fuck* at age 34. Entering the MILF zone with the utmost grace and bomb-assiest class! Defo a bit on the *plumper* side, but anybody who says that's a bad thing is a coward who wouldn't know a good time if it busted in their butt.

Honestly, the only thing worse about her body compared to mine was the lack of freckles. My freckles were a thing of *queenly greatness*, and looking at a face full of plain, even skin was p-boring by comparison. But with every passing day, such a reflection became *normaler* and *normaler*.

And the same was true for showering, especially just a rinse. Water falls, trickles down my body, through my curves, and makes me feel a li'l sexy. Soap goes top to bottom, from my face to my pits to my feet, and then I get all dry and apply my lotion all over. 'Cos hotness like this is worth chopping down a tree or seven for extra kindling.

Next came the drip, and with a body with curves for days like this, all it really took was the right fit to make yourself look sexy. And through enough sleuthing, I found the fits that worked for *me*. Tonight, I settled on an 'eye-catching' crimson tank top, cut low enough to show off my boobs, and high enough to show my midriff, the thinnest part on this *thick* body. Paired with some black yoga pants, three-quarters length to show off a bit of skin from above my angles, and with a high waist that went *right under* my belly button, to get *everything* wrapped up. All *nice and tight!*

I took a little time to enjoy this sight for myself. But not wanting this moment to fade away, I took a couple pics for my followers on the double T's so they can scope out these (almost) double D's. My socials used to just be for art stuff, but since I landed in this bombshell bod, I've been luring out some wimp-ass simps, thirstin' for that *boss mama goodness*.

It was definitely one of the biggest perks of this body. All it took was some ass or tiddy and dudes kept flooding into my replies, bustin' all over the place with emojis and saying pervy shit in Spanish. I was used to that kind of reaction with my pervy art, just not the Spanish stuff. But considering I was a Latina hottie, that really wasn't a surprise. ...What was a surprise was the number of dudes who said I should get tats or piercings.

This was my body and I could do whatever I wanted. So nothing was stopping me from hitting up the local parlors, getting all metal-faced, scoring a sleeve of Arabic, and spending a couple months getting a full-on irezumi *back* tattoo. Except, y'know, I wasn't about that vibe. I was always a bigger fan of that sweet *nat-u-ral hotness*, and I had to maintain a crisp image for *the kids*.

I laughed as I made my sixtieth corny goof for the day and finally left the bathroom to get on with my *maidly duties*. Heading to the second floor laundry room to fold the clothes and distribute them to the right rooms. Grabbing a sponge and some detergent to clean up the sinks in all four bathrooms. Gathering up and taking out the trash. You know, regular maid shit.

The *old* Barbara never liked being called that. *Maid*— the M-word— but the *new* Barbara was all about it. It made me sound *sexier*. Though, it was something that I kinda sorta *abso-leaking-fruitly* opted into.

After *The Final Swap*, I couldn't just strut this body out and still call myself Maxxie Flare, say I was 18, and go to college like nothing happened. 'Cos nobody would believe the story that I got perma-swapped with my pseudo-aunty.

After weighing the cons, the cost-benefit analysis, and all that logical whatzit, we decided that the only way us *waku waku* seven could ever hope to retain a normal life was to grow from what we've got. We didn't need to follow the same path or anything, but we couldn't pretend like nothing changed. Well, at least IRL.

I didn't need to take on the mantle of the homemaker, caretaker, and acting house mama. I could've repped that sweet juicy NEET life, freeloading off my parents forever after spitting a sob story about how I lost 16 of my best and most productive years. But that's some *coward shit*, and no matter the body, no matter the name, *I ain't no coward*.

So, why'd I decide to be a homemaker? Because I didn't take charge and get stuff done, who the *frick* would? Yeah, Tyler knew everything about keeping a home clean and functional, but I couldn't expect an 11-year-old, let alone an 11-year-old *boy*, to keep the house clean. And while getting a new caretaker was an option, I didn't want some *stranger* coming into my house to clean everything and talk dirt about me for being who I is.

As such, I decided to be the lady in charge of all the cleaning, cooking, and coordinating crap. Not because I *had* to, and not because I blamed myself for the VD breaking— that was *nobody's fault*— but, I just felt... responsible. I was an adult before all this jazz, but as a capital-A *Adult*, I get this nagging feeling like I should take care of these little chickadees. So I took on the duty and... I goldarn *wish* I paid more attention to what Babs used to do.

Tyler has been a trooper, telling me everything I needed to know, filling up an indexed composition notebook with *tips and tricks*. So for as much as I might bitch, it only takes about four hours to do my *maidly duties* everyday, meaning it's not *that bad*. Hell, I haven't even made that many mistakes, and have been moving through my duties pretty quickly— at about four hours a day.

It's given me the vibe— the impression— *the vibepression*— that maybe *this sexy MILF-y body of mine* has muscle memory for all this caretaking stuff. I've certainly felt *weirder* impulses after

being in someone else's body for a full day. Like when I kept craving lemons when I was Haruki, even though *she* didn't even like lemons. And of all the traits to inherit, this one was pretty good. At least a B-rank.

Besides, cleaning up a house like this was *seven* times better than 'trying to hold down a 9 to 5' and *five* times better than taking a bunch of classes I didn't give a crap about. I'm only giving that a 5x multiplier because learning stuff is always kinda neat, but not when you need to go to a place, sit for hours, and take tests. But I *never, ever* need to do any of that crap again. I can learn whatever I want! And once autumn settles in and the kids are out of the house, I'll be sure to do what I gotta do to hone my craft. As they say, the internet is the best university, because it is the universe! ...*Whatever that means!*

When I put it that way, this actually sounds like a pretty sweet deal for me, but if there was one point of contention—aside from the years that were 'stolen' from me—is the *hands*. It was something I thought about as I tied off the garbage bag and carried it out back. The hardest thing for me to get used to was *the little stuff*. The way my fingers held a pen and how the teeny muscles inside them changed how I drew.

Fortunately, I had nabbed a pair of good hands. Hands that had done some hard work, but were treated with *oodles* of care. Was I treating them with the same level of care nowadays? Well, I pretty much had to. Hand exercises became part of my morning routine, same with using a brace when I needed it. The way I read it, my hands were the most important part of my body, and some—Tyler—might say that I don't give the same TLC to the rest of me, but that is—factually—*untrue*. Sure, I packed on a couple kilos since summer started, but that was a *choice*, not an accident.

This is my body, and I like having some extra beef on them bones, junk in the trunk, and goods in the hood. Thick is the next generation of sexy, and so long as I maintain it, it's not a problem.

...Shit, I'm gonna need to start doing some regular exercises too, aren't I? Guess I'll need to re-open Ken's workout room or something. Ugh!

But, um, yeah. The usual devils of health and fitness, and age, aside, shit was going fine as hell in this new body of mine, and I didn't even need to throw away my online persona or anything. Sure, people thought my voice sounded deeper and my style drifted when I resumed the art streams back in July, but I choked it up to a new mic and a minor hand injury and nobody said nothing more. I was just lucky that my voice *pretty much* didn't change with my body.

As I let these thoughts bounce about while doing my Saturday chores, I realized that it was already 18:30 and decided it was time to call the kids down for dinner. While we were *supposed* to change bedrooms a while back, we quickly realized that it was easier to keep our old bedrooms and change around stuff like the mattresses and wardrobes. Mostly because I had too much shit that I still wanted, but Maxine and Tyler didn't. The bedroom with the door that

once had the name 'Maxxisaurus' engraved onto it was 'Barbara's room' while the smallest of the bedrooms was Maxine's bedroom.

"Hey girl, you wanna come down for dinner?" I said as I was inches away from Maxine's bedroom.

After giving the door three knocks and waiting an extra five seconds, I opened up the door and saw Maxine, standing in front of her full-length mirror. She was looking all done up, with a snug cream-colored top that left her semi-trim midriff show. A fresh pink jacket that was a little baggy on her, but in a cute way. Little jean shorts that couldn't fit shit in them, but had these cute little bedazzlings on the side, all held up with a pink belt— *because style*. But le *pièce de résistance* was the pink and blue bow on her head, with her hair all nestled up in a high-pony.

It was an *über kawaii* look for an *über kawaii* gal. Alas, alas, ornery like an ass, she didn't seem to see it that way, as she was all frazzled when I came in. Like I caught her masturbating to polaroids of dog feet.

"B-B-Barbara? W-why didn't you knock?"

"I did, but it looks like you were in la-la land, weren't ya, girl?" I said, moseying into her room.

"Oh... S-Sorry about that, I was just startled and—"

"You are so adorable, I could eat you up, I swear."

"T-Thank you, but you should not open my door without permission, what if I was... *naked*?"

"Like I said 5 hours ago, we've *all* seen you naked, Maxine. And you look *great*, so don't get any ideas about being anything other than a big old cutie patootie!"

"S-Still, that's—"

"And if you were doing that, I would be able to hear it. I've got the ears of a homemaker. I can *tell* when kids are up to something, especially when their name is *Maxxisaurus Omega Flare*."

"That's... a little disturbing to know. That I never have full privacy."

"You do *most of the time*, just not when it's time for dinner. You won't see me barging in past 21, so schedule *things* accordingly."

As I made my teasing comments— because Maxine was *such* a good teasing target— I looked at her face. Her lips curled in as she tried to suppress a smile, her eyes looking down at the floor, and her arms wrapped around her chest.

"I swear, every passing day you just get cuter and cuter. You are so much cuter than *you* were back in May that it's not even funny."

"O-Oh, you know that's not true, Barbara, I..."

"Maxine, can we sit down and chat?"

"...Of course."

We then sat down on her cushy bed— a bed I knew *very well*— and I wrapped my arm around Maxine. She always flinched when I did this, but I knew it made her feel comfy and loved.

"You know, we started this summer with the goal of redefining who we are. Not throwing everything away, but taking ourselves in a newer, more comfortable direction. Personally, I think you, me Tyler— all of us— we've been making big strides. Don't you agree, Maxine?"

She looked down at her hands, staring at her fly fit, her long nails, and wiggling the toes of her bare feet. She looked over herself and took a deep breath, before looking back at me, all smiles.

"I... I feel like I'm moving slower than others, but... I do."

"I can tell that, even though you still carry some needless guilt over what happened, you have never been happier. Am I wrong?"

"No, Barbara, you're not. I... I feel bad about this. Part of me still feels like I've stolen something, but I would be lying if I said that this was not... similar to a fantasy I had in the past. I'm... I'm a woman. I like looking at myself now. I feel comfortable in my skin. So many anxieties and stresses are... no longer there. When I look in the mirror, I see a cute girl, and I know that cute girl is me. Seeing her face, feeling her body, hearing her voice... it all makes me so... happy."

Maxine then popped out of her bed and walked to the mirror, pressing her hand against the glass.

"With every passing day, things feel a bit more normal. They feel a bit more right. And my reflection feels more and more like not only a reflection of my body, but my very soul."

"And it should feel that way now, Maxine," I said as I placed a hand on her shoulder. "Because the girl in the mirror... that's *you*. And it always will be, *no matter what*."

As I told her these encouraging words, I gave her a kiss on the forehead.

"This could have played out any number of ways and, for your own sake, I'm glad things turned out this way. Because I know that this was the best outcome for you, Maxine."

We then enjoyed a hug, wrapping our arms around one another and... just staying there for a moment, neither one of us saying anything as we relished in each other's company. ...Until some *boy* started clapping his hands and stomping his feet like he owned the damn place.

"Such a touching display of affection, you two. If I didn't know any better, I could swear that you two were *sisters*."

As Tyler interrupted our bonding time, I broke my *physical* bond with Maxine and sighed at the little man, dressed up like he was going to a shmancy gala with his folks. Dress shirt, slacks, bow tie, everything except the shoes, because he was barefooting it like a champ.

"So, do you need a pep talk from *big sis* about how you're great and she loves you?" I asked, looking down at Tyler and giving him a nice view of my tits.

"No thanks. I know I'm just a kid, but I'm a real fast learner. I just need to hold onto the determination I need to get through school, hopefully impress the teachers enough to get *special treatment*. ...That sounded better in my head."

"Ugh," Maxine groaned. "The last thing I want to think about is school. My brain still feels *fried* from that... *summer homework*."

"C'mon Maxine," I began, "As a *high school graduate*, you should've had no problem with a GED study guide. I mean, you graduated less than three months ago. Now, *if* you were an *11-year-old*, like your brother, what you did would be *monumentally impressive*. But here, it was just to keep your mind sharp."

I was being kind of shitty with that comment, but it was important to keep up appearances, even in private like this, and Maxine was a good sport. She knew I would never want to hurt a hair on her pretty little head.

"In fact," I continued, "I just ordered another set of books for you to read. Just because you're not jumping into college does not mean you can escape education, young lady."

"*UGH!* I already graduated, like you said. Do I *really* need to do all of this?"

"I mean, you just could choose not to. I'm not going to kick you out or anything. But I'm sure your parents wouldn't be happy about their daughter not knowing what the seventh amendment was."

"The... what does that have to do with being a—" Maxine began before I cut her off.

"Do you *not* remember the constitution test? You needed to pass it to graduate. Trust me, even as a GED-er myself, it was a pain in the *derriere* to study for."

"Hey Barbara, what is the ninth amendment?" Tyler asked, sounding like a snot-nosed punk.

"Uh... cruel and unusual punishment?"

"Oof! So close. No, that's the eighth amendment. Ninth is... rights not enumerated in the Constitution are retained by people."

"The hell does that even mean?" I asked without thinking.

"I dunno, why are you asking me? *I'm just a kid!*"

Tyler could be *such a cunt* sometimes, but I loved him for it.

As the three of us had a little laugh over these antics, we heard Tyler's stomach audibly grumble.

"Aw, are you feeling a *trifle bit peckish*, little man? Do you want some din-din?" I said in my best baby voice.

In response, Tyler brushed his hand against my plump cheeks and looked at me with a stern expression. His voice deepened, making him sound like a little kid doing a 'dad' voice.

"Don't you *dare* talk down to me! You are a mere *maid*, a *servant*, and if you *displease* me again, I shall ensure that *my father* personally *disposes* you from my home. You shall treat me with the *utmost respect*, understood?"

"W-Why, yes. Y-young Master, I shall do whatever it is you ask of me."

"Whatever I ask of you, eh? I understand that your ilk often know English as a second language, but do exercise care with your words, for liberal promises are prone to abuse. And I just might take you up on that offer in a way you'd rather not imagine... *or would you?* I know how *your people* can be."

As Tyler got into his rich man groove, Maxine stood up and slapped her brother on the face. I could tell that it hurt.

"Don't even joke about *fucking* the woman who raised you, Tyler. Even as a joke."

"Okay, jeez, sis," Tyler said, rubbing his cheek. "We're just messing around."

“And I don’t like it. As your big sister, I have the *authority* to tell you no. And I’m telling you *NO!*”

As we let this awkwardness linger for a moment, we all busted up, laughing at the absurdity of the situation.

“I guess what you’ve been saying is true, Barbara,” Maxine began. “No matter what, we’re still ourselves, and... I love you for that. It drives me a *little* crazy sometimes, but... I love you guys.”

We then gathered around and hugged, pressing our bodies against each other in a warp embrace... and shoving our boobs against Tyler’s head. Ah well. *He’s a boy*. I’m sure he enjoyed it.

With 15 minutes killed and our tummies hankering for some grub, we headed downstairs for dinner. Now, I could have whipped them up something fast, but when cooking, it was the most economical to make things in bulk. Why make one dinner when you could make two by doubling the ingredients? Between set-up and clean-up, it was a *waste* to do otherwise, and that has *always* been part of the Barbara code!

So instead of looking over a stove to make some quick pasta and meatballs or whatever, I made extra BBQ stuff and reheated it with the jolly old microwave, as was the Barbara way. Kids don’t notice the difference, not even li’l Tyler.

We just grabbed what we wanted, made it nice and *HOT*, and headed to the *sensibly sized* dining table. For us *girls*, we settled on taking some of the grilled chicken and tossing it over some salad. Because Maxine was trying to lose weight, and I had to do maintenance *sometimes*. Tyler though? He was a gosh darn *American* with his plate. Cheeseburger, hot dog with pickles and onions, fried potatoes, which were basically just fat french fries, and a glass of Sprite with ice.

Calorie counting was for commies and cool cats, but that was over a full grand he was shoving into his face when counting all the *BREAD*.

“Damn, Ty. Where you gonna put all that food?” I asked.

“In my *belly* and my metabolism will take care of the rest. But I get why you’re so concerned.”

“Yeah, because if I ate that, it’d go straight *to* my ass. But for you... shit, it’s just gonna go straight *outta* your ass.”

Maxine laughed at the comment, nearly choking on a chunk of chicken.

Tyler continued to eat like the boy he was, guilty of glutton to the third degree— *whatever that means*— I bad-mouthed him, but, to be honest, I did really miss my ability to eat like an asshole. Instead, I had to balance this *prime thickness* and not surpass the *chubby cutie threshold*.

Which also meant I had to give up my beloved CHarM tea. Never again shall my mornings be met with the sweet blend of chocolate, honey, milk, tea leaves, and hot water. Instead... I got just super, *super* boring. The hot drink that really got me going in the morning was the swill of adulthood. The capitalist caffeine concoction of Colombia and colonialism. Coffee. Black coffee. At first, I thought she was far too bitter and bitchy to ever dance across my virgin tongue.

Alas, my tongue hath been deflowered nearly a score prior. Accordingly, she became what this body of mine craves. Bitter, hot, and filled with a *natural drug*. In fact, merely thinking of her kindled these cravings, but I knew it was most unwise to drink her sweet juices, or else I shall be tormented by *the profoundest of unrests* 'til the break of dawn.

It was... *weird* having these new preferences accrue up in my dome. Liking coffee, enjoying the occasional vodka soda, not having much of a sweet tooth, *willingly* doing chores. I still felt like myself in my heart of hearts, and this is totes the figure I was aiming to cop by 34— and that's when it hit me. *Like a wet sack of giraffe cocks*. I was just *me, but older!*

"How did it take me two and a half months to figure that shit out?!" I shouted, slamming on the table.

"Figure *what* out, Barb?" Tyler asked me, sipping his soda.

"That... I'm really just who I was at 18, but older. Pretty much all the changes are just me getting old and learning to embrace it, because it's too much work to fight it at this point."

"*Pfft*. I could've told you that a good month ago. I thought it was pretty obvious."

He did have a point. While Jad, Lynne, Shiaka, and Zoe all went about some major changes, we pretty much are just us but with a new role. Maxine's living her *almost* dream life, but working on the whole adult-ing thing. Tyler's regressed into being a rich boy and is loving it. As any sane person would. For real, the only way he could have more privilege is if he could *shit out the melanin*.

As I let my mind wander about, and Tyler tore through his food, we eventually finished up dinner. As the diligent caretaker, I tossed the dishes into the dishwasher, let Cissy do her thang, and looked at the time. 19:15. Meaning that I had a good chunk of a night to spend however I damn well pleased, and I knew *just* what I wanted to work on!

It all began with plopping my ass into my chair. She served my heiny thousands of hours in the past. While it took a bit for her groove to adapt to my new *girth*, she had accommodated, and I

felt like I could stay in her forever as she *caressed* my folds. But she also filled me with great determination. With my stylus pen in hand and an image in my mind, I began to draw.

Three hours later, I looked at my latest creation. It was nothing too ambitious, but it was something that I should've drawn almost a year ago considering the avalanche of TG adventures I've been on. It was my latest piece of *official* artwork for the GOAT 1990s anime *K.O. Century Beast Warriors*! I mean, the rights were technically made out to Maxxisaurus Omega Flare, not *me*, but it was close enough.

The art itself featured Akumako, the *actual* best character, TG-ing Wan, Bud, and Mei Mer—the three central protagonists. It was not the first time I had drawn girl Bud or Wan, or male Mei Mer, but it was good to bust out these remixed designs for the first time in a long while. I got to update my designs to my modern standards, and give them the most *adoracut*e expressions these hands of mine could muster.

With everything colored and looking like it just jumped straight outta 1994, I loaded it up on my socials and sent it out to my followers. I took a moment to enjoy the scattering of reactions from people who followed me for my art, and not my sexy bod. The replies and notes were filled with gushings about how cute this was, and one dude wishing that this was part of the anime. I mean, *I wish it was too*, but Ken and Ellie would *never* give me two hundred grand to drop on a project like that.

As the initial burst of comments came to a crawl, I saw the clock tick past 22:30. As much as I hated it, this was about my bedtime, and I started doing all the usual boring crap. Brushing the face, washing the teeth, doing the stretches to avoid morning soreness, *the works*.

By the time I was done, it was already past 23:00, and I was under my sheets, naked as can be, trying to fall asleep... except I kept thinking back to the pool party.

"Cripes, everyone was so *freaking* sexy there."

Seeing Lynne letting her girls hang out, and letting them loose during the race— *all according to keikaku*. Seeing Zoe strut his hot bod like a dog, getting all tired and sweaty as *his woman* made him work. Seeing Shiaka embrace her inner boss mama, ditching that demure crap. Watching Jad be a *fucking bro* after all the shit he's gone through. And letting myself get a nice look at the girls whenever I happened to look down or lay back. Just thinking about them got me feeling all *hot and wild*!

With some *succulent juices* trickling down my thighs, I decided it was time for a little *puff-puff*, with the help of Strider-kun! ...Which was my purple vibrator's pet name. With the natural lube already applied, he slid in real nice-like, and I cranked hip up to medium to get things rolling along...

I know I said that I was stoked on showering in other people's bodies, but the truly *greatest experience* of being another person wasn't being naked and wet. It was being naked and *getting* wet. Ever since I felt the pleasures of a penis, working Jad's dick raw, I became lowkey *obsessed* with masturbating in other people's bodies. I felt the pleasure of *everyone* in our little circle. From Ken to Haruki to Natasha, and everyone in between. I even snuck into some of those *adults-only swap 'n' fuck fiestas*. And it was a shame that I wouldn't get to experience what it was like to get off or fuck as another couple hundred people.

That wasn't to say that this body was bad. If anything, it was probably my favorite of all the ones I tried. Though, that really wasn't a surprise. The first IRL naked woman I saw was Babs. Seeing her moan softly, trying not to wake up the kids, as she let *that thing* rock her 'privates' before shooting out that 'clear pee-pee.' It was confusing yet captivating, just like *Elfen Lied* and all that *Pokémon* porn. But I remember, at age 9, looking up at that and imagining myself in that position. And now... here *I* was. 10 kgs heavier, with a vibe between my legs, a hand on a boob, and a nip in my mouth. I felt like I was *skidding on the rim of heaven*.

Just as I started seeing that pearly white gate, I felt my juices gush out of me and spray over my hand. Once things cooled down for a sec, I brought my fingers to my mouth.

"It tastes just like honey. *Exactly* like honey."

I put Strider-kun aside as I wallowed in the afterglow and threw the sheets over me, not caring if they got dirty, because tomorrow was sheet-washing Sunday anyway.

With the horny demon controlling my brain satiated, I was able to calm down. Yet as I did so, I couldn't help but linger on one final thought. I was just me, but older... yet I didn't have a partner. I was 34. *Now* was the time to date and marry, same with having a kid, and while I could wait a few years, I knew my window was closing. I knew that before June 2015, I wasn't hankering to get hitched and was fine with just friends with benefits.

As for potential suitors, I dunno, my group was pretty limited unless I wanted to snipe some teenagers. Raiyne Underwood and Babs had a bit of a *thing goin' on*. But there was no way I could be girlfriends with an English teacher who doesn't let students use words like shaz, glomp, and dochy. Haruki's dope, but she's a decade younger than me. Natasha's nice when she can let loose, but that's jumping up 18 years and I know she's gonna be a *bitch* when she gets real old. Which leaves *Lynne*.

Every time I've seen her, she found a way to get a little sexier. She got shook at the start of summer, but now she's *this close* to dressing and acting like the nine outta ten she is. Knowing the bond we *truly* share, I'm sure she'd be happy if I came out to her and just said it straight up. That I've been waiting for you to get a clue for a *decade* and I want us to be wives! But I can only imagine how she's *truly* been adapting to this. How it feels for her to look at her *son* live his life and carve his own path while she retains the role of homemaker and mother.

...Though, that didn't stop me from fantasizing about us together on her bed, naked. She would sheepishly look away from me as I helped her discover the finer things about her body, and cast aside any dangling bits of taboo that rested in her pretty little head. As I lingered on this thought, my eyes fluttered shut and I fell asleep, sprawled across my bed, with a hand between my legs.

Session Extra.4: Confessions



Saturday, March 28, 2015 - 16:24

The plan was that we would swap bodies for a week. That we would spend our spring break in the body of someone else, analyze how it affected our sense of self, and log what we learned. While I desired to participate in more elaborate and formalized studies than this, it was the best I could hope for.

The VD was too powerful and dangerous for us to reveal it to the world at large, but that did not mean we did not have a *duty* to understand it. To use it as a tool to pursue some level of scientific discovery. While I was no psychologist, I could plainly recognize how one's identity and sense of self could change when in the body of another person and... it was a concept that fascinated me.

Over the past 5 months, much of my leisure time has been spent cataloging what my friends and I have learned by swapping bodies. Notes, theories, anecdotes— whatever I could analyze, quantify or qualify. All under the hope that one day, somehow, the ability to switch bodies could be shared with the world at large. It was a dangerous idea that could be used to destroy institutions, cause wars, and dispose of one's enemies. In fact, the risks were so great that I often worried about how casually my friends were using it. Especially after New Year's... I am grateful that I barely remember what I did that night, let alone whose body I was in.

Regardless, our current agreement placed me in the body of Shiaka Kurokawa 6 hours ago, and I was to remain within her body for another 162 hours. We gave ourselves loose guidelines for what we would do here, but I chose to help Shiaka, and myself, get accustomed to our temporary bodies with the help of a light sport. It was a relatively warm and sunny day for early spring, so we made our way to a local 'tennis complex.' A series of three public tennis courts, open to all, surrounded by a 3-meter-tall chain link fence.

I began the next set by carefully lobbing the ball upward, swinging my arm up as I gauged the strength, before sending it free into the air and striking it over the net, onto Shiaka's side of the court. Just as I had borrowed her body, she borrowed mine, the body of Zoe Xing. A tall athletic body, bound in a light gray jacket, jeans, and gym shoes, my dark hair just long enough to be fluttering in the wind.

It was remarkably different from the body I wore. Short, frail, dressed in a cream-colored sweater. The knee-length A-line skirt and leggings obscured by the breasts hanging off of my chest. Its long blonde hair was bound in a loose ponytail that flopped in the wind, but not long enough to brush against my neck. While not the ideal dress for even a sport like this, I made due, and quickly began moving toward the ball as Shiaka lobbed it my way. Alas, I was not fast enough, and the ball whizzed past the green court, not touching it once, before bouncing on the burgundy concrete, and slamming into the fence.

"S-Sorry about that!" Shiaka shouted, slightly softening her deep voice. "It always takes me a while to get... used to this strength."

"No need to apologize," I said, speaking with a cutesy and willowy voice that came naturally. "It is all part of a learning experience. Remember, you need to gauge your power. You can't put your all into every swing."

I paused as I looked at the other five balls that were scattered over the court before heading to the bucket of balls by the net. The bucket contained another six.

"Let's just try to maintain a rally for the time being," I said as I served another ball.

My serve was lighter than I hoped, but Shiaka was able to hit it back, I followed and, five swings later, we established a rhythm that we could maintain. Every motion in another body was slightly different. The tug of one's weight, the way one's arms were shaped, the length of their legs, feet, and so forth. It all made such a difference that I could believe that an amateur athlete in their 'preferred body' could defeat a professional in an unfamiliar body. A theory that... raised many questions about how body swapping would transform the world of athletics.

Regardless, I did not allow my mind to drift far, and kept my eyes solely focused on Shiaka. How she swayed about before me, her movements awkward and exaggerated, her shots often too

hard or narrowly missing the racket. She was getting better, gradually, as she settled into this tall male body, but I still felt the need to ask her a question I refrained from voicing until now.

“So, why did you want to spend a week in my body? Didn’t you say that being in my body felt like a ‘big, weird dream you couldn’t wake up from?’”

As I said that, Shiaka struck the ball with extra force. I retaliated, and just barely returned the ball to her court, where she bounced the ball back to me, her swing far more gentle than it was a moment ago.

“I... I’m sorry I said that.”

“Again, no need to apologize. I understand why someone might be uncomfortable in a body like mine. Especially someone who has gone through as much as you.”

My mind flashed back to when she gathered us at her house, around her sister and parents, who explained what happened when she was 8-years-old. Before she revealed the scars that she had worn for the majority of her life. The scars that *I* currently wore.

“That’s actually why I wanted to swap with you, Zoe. Because your body is so... unlike mine. So unlike *me*. After the... *incident*, I accepted I was weak. That I was frail, that I was small, and that I could not stand up to people. I wanted to stick to the background, not stand out, because I was afraid that someone would hurt me again.”

Shiaka held out her racket to stop the ball, causing it to lightly bounce on the terrain below.

“Feats of strength and signs of athleticism made me feel nervous, because I saw them as traits that would be valuable in an assaulter. When I first attended high school in January 2011, I was terrified. Being around so many people in high school, so many of them tall, fast, and strong, I... I did not really feel safe around any of them. Because I knew they could hurt me however they wanted, and there was no way I could stop them. Maxxie was weird, but sweet. I could tell that she would never dream of hurting me. Jade wasn’t as tall as my dad and... despite presenting as a boy, I could tell that she was passive and lax. They were both easy people for me to get comfortable around... but the same was not true for you, Zoe. I saw you as someone who could hurt me. The mere presence of that power... it scared me.”

“Shiaka, I have never so much as *imagined* hurting you. I have only raised my hand against someone else once before and... I regret it.”

“That time you protected Vivi back in elementary school?”

“Yes,” I answered with a sigh. “She was being harassed by some asshole— I have chosen to forget his name— I stood up before her, he hit me, and after I took enough punishment, I hit him back, sending him onto the ground.”

“Then he ran away,” Shiaka continued, “crying, while Vivi started yelling at you for resorting to violence. But she still had your back when the teachers came questioning you. That story helped me learn to trust you. You only ever used violence to protect someone, and even then, you regret it.”

“You’re over-romanticizing things. It wasn’t so melodramatic or intentional. I was just a kid, and I wasn’t thinking logically.”

“Well, that’s not how Vivi saw it. As a little girl, she thought you were the coolest boy at school, and she actually had a bit of a crush on you for a little while after that.”

“This is the first I’m hearing about this... She might have been the first girl to harbor feelings for me, but she was not the last.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Over the years, I have had a handful of girls ask me out. They thought I was handsome and, based on that alone, assumed they would enjoy going on a date with me. I always declined their offers, saying I was not interested at the time and that I needed to focus on my studies. Both of which were true. I suppose there is a small part of me that regrets not even attempting to learn about any of these women, but I do not need a high school romance to be happy.”

“Romance wasn’t something I thought I would ever get to experience for myself. Same with having a relationship. Even if I found someone who loved me for who I am, I know that even good relationships can turn bad. That even people who love each other can hurt each other.”

“Shiaka, I would never hurt you, *no matter what*.”

As I said this, Shiaka laughed and walked toward me.

“Is that supposed to be a *confession*?”

I laughed at her attempted sarcasm before replying.

“What I mean is that I want to be there to support you, Shiaka. You are a brilliant woman, someone who has overcome a lot to get to where you are today. And I know you could reach even greater heights if you had the needed support. While I might not be a personal or empathetic person, I do care about you, and I want to offer you whatever support I can to help you become your best self.”

She timidly looked down from me, a giant smile on her face. It was surreal to see my original body adopt such an expression, but it made me happy regardless.

“When I’m in your body, I feel like the barriers I used to define myself are... gone. Like I can do everything I thought I couldn’t do. I’m strong, hearty, and tall. It was scary at first, but it’s also... *freeing*. It is an intimidating yet enticing freedom, one that I am still coming to terms with, but... I think it is what I need to take the next step in my life. So, thank you, Zoe. Thank you for lending me your body, and looking after mine. I know you will take good care of it.”

Shiaka then grabbed me off the ground, wrapping me in her arms as she hugged me tightly. A bit *too* tightly...

“I’m happy that I could help you, Shiaka. You’re my friend and—”

“I know we’re friends, but... do you want to be *something more*?”

My mind skipped for a moment as I tried to process what she was asking. Before I could respond, she let me out of her grasp and began walking toward the trees lining one side of this tennis court.

“Zoe, we spent a lot of time together these months. Maxxie, Jade, Terra, and everyone else were having their own ‘body swapping funsies’ while we were going over our findings. We were gathering the data, I was writing the models, you were interpreting the data— it was like the best group project I ever had in my life, and I think we learned a lot about body swapping. ...But that is not the only thing we learned about. Spending time with you, seeing how cool, collected, and analytical you were. I knew you were always a super smart person, but seeing you in action, it changed my impression of you and— *DAMN IT!* I’m a *man* now, so I should say it like a *man*, without all of this *preamble*.”

Shiaka then took a deep breath, but I already knew the words that would escape her mouth.

“So, do you want to be... boyfriend and girlfriend?”

I could feel the cynical businessman within me telling me to avoid personal connections with co-workers, urging me to be *professional*, to be *unemotional*. But as I mulled over my feelings, as I dissociated myself from the ‘image’ of Zoe Xing, I was able to find my *true* feelings.

“You know, it’s rude to trap a *girl* like that and ask her *such* a serious question,” I said, putting a hand on my hip and flipping my ponytail about.

Shiaka stammered at my response, clearly not expecting anything other than a binary answer.

“However,” I said as I placed a hand on Shiaka’s massive shoulders, “I do like you *a lot*, and hope that this will mark the beginning of a beautiful relationship. Don’t you agree, *boyfriend*?”

As I said that word, ‘boyfriend,’ Shiaka began laughing, her voice loud and booming as she clenched her sides.

“*Goldarn it, Zoe!* You are *so good* when you show some emotion... Maybe you can learn something about yourself by being in my body.”

“Heh. It’s something I noticed back in November, back when I was impersonating Maxxie at school. When I’m someone else, it’s easy for me to... fall into character, I suppose. I feel that I can relax and ‘play’ more when I am not presenting as myself. That I can be more emotive and explore more intense feelings. Especially when I’m in the body of a girl. I’m not sure if it is due to a change in hormones, brain chemicals, or merely a placebo effect caused by stereotypes about women being more emotional. But I feel that I have access to things I... *denied* myself as a man.”

“Oh, *really*?”

Shiaka turned around and looked at me with a sinister glimmer in her eyes. I stepped back into the chain link fence, only for her to place her hands on the fence, locking me in as she looked down at me, an uneven smile on her face.

“So, I guess it’s *up to me* to help you break out of your shell, topple the barriers and help you pursue your true self?”

“I like to think of the barriers more like a gate I have a key to open, but rarely do. Or in other words, I don’t need to *break out* of nothing. But I would appreciate the opportunity to let this more fun side of myself out to play. Well, assuming you approve, *mister boyfriend*.”

I then grabbed the collar of Shiaka’s jacket, pulling her head down and her eyes parallel to mine. With a look of shock on her face, I planted my lips against hers. Shiaka recoiled a second later, releasing her arms from the fence and freeing me. She stared at me for a moment, a blank expression on her face, before she took a step toward me, lifted me into her arms, and kissed me on the lips.

“So, does this all still feel like a ‘big, weird dream you couldn’t wake up from?’”

“Not quite. The dream has gotten bigger and weirder than I ever thought possible. But... I don’t think I *ever* want it to end.”

Saturday, August 15, 2015 - 18:03

I looked out the window as the houses passed me by, one after another. Every trip to the Flare household, it was always the same houses, gradually growing in size and wealth or, in this case, diminishing. My eyes drifted over to the rearview mirror, where I saw my reflection. A bored look was on my light tan face, my blonde hair was fluttering in the wind, and my body was dressed in a light blue sundress.

My eyes continued to drift across the interior of the car. A car that was given to Zoe back in January, after Kenneth Flare learned of the VD and decided that we could use more help with ‘transportation.’ It was a nice vehicle— a 2013 model that probably cost 50 grand when new— and it was *spotless*. All Kenneth asked in return was that Jad and I *finally* get our licenses. But I was not looking at the car for the sake of looking at it. My eyes merely lingered upon it as they made their way to the man in the driver’s seat. Zoe Xing.

His slightly damp black hair fluttered in the wind, sunglasses covered his eyes as the afternoon sun beamed down on his light complexion, and on his face, he wore a slight smile. Beneath his face, he wore his typical dress shirt and slacks, while adopting the same regimented ‘driving posture’ he always did. I thought about teasing him for such rigidity, but as the words sat in my mouth, I realized that an apology was in order instead.

“Hey, Zoe? I’m sorry for going a bit hard on you today, I was—”

“No, I deserved it. While I’m sore, I know I will thank you later. I *enjoy* being strong. It makes me feel like I can protect those I love, and it improves my mental health. I know I have been slacking, and I’m fortunate to have such an insistent girlfriend, so... thanks, Shiaka.”

I laughed at his enthusiastic response and went back on my decision to tease him some more.

“You know, if you need additional motivation to work out, I would be *happy* to comply. I could stand to work on my fitness too, so maybe we could work out together.”

“Oh, really? Well, we are on different levels, but I’m sure that would be great motivation for—”

“—Just imagine it, the two of us, wearing *nothing* but the *barest* essentials, working our bodies *hard*, before getting all *wet* and *naked* before *laying together*. Based on your pants, I can tell that is something you are *quite* interested in.”

As I laid the bait, I looked down at Zoe’s pants. He mostly wore slim pants that fit well against his frame and, even when crumpled up while sitting, I could still see the indentation of an erection. It always brought a smile to my face when I managed to make him hard using only my words.

Alas, before the teasing could continue, Zoe reached our destination: his home. A simple one-story residence, two bedrooms, one and a half baths, an unfinished basement, no garage, and no mortgage. Despite having a clear map of it embedded into my mind, I realized that I no longer recognized it as 'my home' but rather 'a home I knew well.'

Regardless of my connection to this place, we wasted little time grabbing our things and entering the front door. We were met with a modest, slightly barren, home. One with few furnishings and few decorations, but it was both clean and organized. Some would say it looked like the residents were still in the process of moving in and making this house a home. But this was how it had been for *years*.

Before we could do much beyond take off our shoes, we were greeted by Natasha Xing. Zoe's mother and the only person he could truly call 'family.' A 52-year-old Ukrainian woman, about as tall as me, slightly overweight, dressed in simple house clothes. Her eyes were colored the same shade of hazel as her son, and her dark brown hair was cut short. There were a few gray hairs on her head and her face had become home to more than a few wrinkles. Wrinkles that she normally hid with make-up, but not when she was lounging around her home.

She looked at Zoe before looking at me, first with a blank, repressed, expression, before adopting a light smile.

"Hello, you two. Did you have fun at your 'pool party?'" Natasha asked, a noticeable accent lingering in her voice.

"Yes, *Mama*, we all had a great time at the Flare residence," Zoe replied, placing a slight accent on the word *mama*.

"It's always a blast when we all get together, and it was nice having one last party before school starts again," I answered. "Oh, and thank you for having me over, by the way."

Natasha sighed as she took in my response, before smiling again.

"It is always a pleasure to have you around, Shiaka. ...And you look very nice today."

"T-Thank you, Natasha. But this really is not much. I didn't bother to put any make-up on after the pool party or anything, so I know I don't look my *best*."

"Zoe... you look exhausted, is everything alright?"

"Ah, yes, *Mama*. I just wound up swimming a lot more than I thought, so I'm planning on taking it easy tonight. Maybe turning in early."

“That was largely my fault,” I added. “Zoe needed a good workout, swimming’s some of the best exercise you can get, and while this was for his own good, I passed the line at some point.”

Natasha shot me a stern look before returning her attention to her son.

“You really shouldn’t let someone else push you around like that, Zoe. You are a man, and a man should take charge of his own life, no matter what.”

Before Zoe could respond, I butted in with an ‘actually comma.’

“Actually, in this country, it is more common for the woman in a relationship to lead the house and the relationship. For them to tell the men what needs to be done and have them do their share. Besides, Zoe knows *he* can do whatever he wants, it’s just that he sees the *wisdom* in a lot of my suggestions. ...And he recognizes the value of keeping his *girlfriend* happy.”

As Zoe laughed in response, Natasha offered me another less than generous look before speaking again.

“...Dinner is ready whenever you are.”

As Natasha walked off to the kitchen, Zoe and I exchanged a glance, wondering if there was something we did to set off his mother. But based on our shared perplexed expressions, neither of us had any idea why she was so... bitter tonight.

A minute later, we found ourselves in the kitchen, sat at a tiny table against the wall, meaning it only sat three. I was in the ‘center’ while Zoe and Natasha sat at my sides, and all of us had a bowl of hearty borscht in front of us, with a ‘dollop’ of yogurt on top. It was a meal from her homeland that Natasha liked to serve whenever she had guests over, but it had been a weekly staple of this household for years. Borscht was easy to make in bulk, the ingredients were cheap, and it was pretty healthy.

She had her own homegrown recipe that she iterated over the years, changing it up based on whatever was on sale at the grocery. This meant you never *exactly* knew how it would taste when you took your first spoonful, and here, it was definitely more sour than it usually was. It was not the most agreeable thing to *my* palate. Though, *I* did not grow up eating this for a good chunk of my life, unlike Zoe, complimented his mother on the meal. She smiled in response, but was quick to brush it aside as nothing special.

I complimented her as well, but she gave me a disapproving glance, as if she could tell it was not to my liking. What can I say? My tastes were formed by the Mexican Japanese American fusion foods that my mother made. Which titillated the palate differently than her authentic Ukrainian cuisine.

The dinner was punctuated with a sense of awkwardness. Neither Zoe nor I had much to say, and Natasha maintained a contemplative look, as if she was having a conversation in her own mind. Throughout all of this, I patiently picked away at my meal while Zoe diligently ate his, finishing first and leaving behind only a small morsel of broth.

Once all three of us were done, Zoe took our bowls to the sink and rinsed them, while Natasha headed into the fridge, where she produced a plate of walnut stuffed prunes. A sweet and nutty dessert that probably should have been called *chocolate* walnut stuffed prunes, given the light layer of dark chocolate over them. I was quick to plop one in my mouth, allowing the sweetness and juiciness to linger on my tongue, but right as I swallowed, Natasha tapped her nails against the table.

“You’ve both been surprisingly quiet.”

“W-Well, we just have little to say, *Mama*,” Zoe said as he swallowed one of his prunes.

“I suppose. You two seem to have grown *very* comfortable with your *new lives*.”

I looked at Zoe with apprehension, and he did the same, knowing that we would need to have one of *those* conversations.

“Natasha, we—” I began, only to be immediately cut off.

“Please. Don’t call me by my name. Call me *Mama*. So I know it’s really *you* in there, Zoe.”

“...*Mama*, I know this is hard for you to accept, but I am not your son. I am Shiaka Kurokawa. And that is who I will be for the rest of my life. The man beside me is your son, Zoe Xing, and no matter what, he will always be your son. This is the way it is now and there is no way to change that.”

“You always were so proper and dedicated. I understand that there is no way for you to go back, but... do either of you truly want this? To live another person’s life and abandon the one you spent 18 years building up?”

“Yes, *Mama*,” Zoe replied, his voice deep and monotone. “We decided we want to continue the lives we inherited, but take them in our own direction. I understand that this is hard for you, that you never signed up for any of this ‘weird body swapping crap.’ If there is anything we can do to make this easier for you, please let us know.”

As Zoe said this, he reached across the table and grabbed his mother’s hand. She clenched his hands with all her might, but Zoe did not so much as flinch. She then hung her head down, groaning to herself before speaking once more.

“With Zoe, I had someone who I could trust. Someone who I cherished. I tried to put him above myself, and told myself that everything I did, I did so he could have the best possible future. Every hour of overtime, every wretched odd job I used to work, every time I replaced a meal with garbage, I did it for him. I did it because I was his mother and... *this* is what good mothers should do.”

Natasha then raised her head and looked at both of us, sniffing while keeping her eyes dry of tears.

“But... the son I knew is no longer one person. He is... two. And no matter how hard I try to look at one of you and see him, I see the half that isn't Zoe. The man wearing my son's face will never remember everything I did for him when he was a boy. He does not know the Mandarin his father taught him, nor does he know the Ukrainian I taught him. He will never again make a passing remark to something foolish I did when he was young, or sound like his father as he repeats one of his favorite phrases. The only one who could is *you*.”

As Natasha looked at me, a forlorn expression on her face, I struggled to think of a response. I knew she felt this way but... hearing it from her lips just made me feel like bursting out in tears. I tried to find the words, a way that I could ask for her forgiveness, for robbing her of something so important just by existing. It was an irrational apology, but it was all my mind could think of. At least, before Zoe shoved his chair back and stood up, looking down at his mother.

“*Mama*. I might not be the Zoe you used to know. My memories are not what you would expect them to be. *Ore wa Nihongo o hanasu ga, Chūgokugo wa hanasanai. Hablo Español, no Ucrainiano*. As you said, I am not *fully* Zoe. I am both Zoe and Shiaka, just as she is both Shiaka and Zoe. But that will eventually change. Over the past two months, we have been losing aspects of our former selves and, eventually, after a few years, we will undergo a complete transformation. Eventually, I will become Zoe entirely, and she will become Shiaka entirely. I may be a different Zoe than the one you knew, but I hope I can make you proud as a mother, and that you can accept me as your son.”

Natasha stared at Zoe with fierce eyes, digging her nails into her palms. I braced myself as I anticipated the worst type of reaction from her. Instead, she brought her hands to her face and sat there in silence, waiting twenty seconds before speaking to us.

“I feel as if this is some divine punishment for my transgressions. For my *lust* and *avarice*. I still remember what happened on New Year's. That decadent celebration of drunkenness and debauchery. I was reluctant to agree to the swap, and when I came to, I found myself in Kenneth's body. I was so large, so strong, that I felt like I could do anything. But before I could come to terms with this form, the true Kenneth, in Lynne's body, approached me, eager to show me what his body was capable of. It was *ravishing*! Strange, foreign, and hazy, but I felt a new world of sensation— a new world of possibilities— open up before me.”

As I heard Natasha recount such an experience, I felt that things were not adding up..

“*Mama*, you never mentioned that you... *enjoyed* it like that,” I said. “You always seemed curious but reluctant. You even said you did it out of obligation, because it was an opportunity only a *fool* would pass over.”

“...I lied to you. I had spent so much of my life feeling like I was trapped. I was trapped in my hometown, trapped around my family, trapped behind the iron curtain. Only once I had grown into a woman was I able to leave in the pursuit of freedom. But I had merely gone from one cage to another. From a communist cage to a capitalist cage. The days were hard, the people were callous, and just when things were getting better— once I got a home, a husband, and a son— it all shattered before me. I was eventually granted stability and capital needed to live in comfort. But as I looked back on my life... I struggled to find much worth celebrating. No accomplishments to my name... except for my son.”

“When I learned of the VD... I saw a way out of this cage. I could be anyone. I could achieve wealth and status via untraceable theft. I could be freed from the shackles of womanhood and age. I could become a *wealthy young American boy*. I could do... anything I could imagine. I fantasized about using the VD to steal the life of someone and kill them before they could comprehend what happened. That way, there would be no way for me to go back. No cage for me to return to.”

“I knew such a fantasy was the epitome of evil, so I stayed my hand. Instead, I merely volunteered to be part of your frequent ‘swaps.’ Every time I swapped with one of you, I became someone more accomplished, attractive, and younger. I was happier in all of your bodies than I was in my own, and I enjoyed them in *every way* I could. I lost myself in this sense of otherness, and I fantasized about stealing every one of them. *Especially* yours, Zoe.”

“As my desires grew greater, I thought about *destroying* this devilish plaything. Its power was too tempting, too grand, and I was not strong enough to resist it. Yet, before I could, it destroyed itself. Upon hearing the news... I did not weep for my child who lost his body. I wept for myself. For I lost the final opportunity to become someone *better*. Part of me is glad that the VD has been removed from this world, that this power is beyond human hands. Yet... things are not back to *normal*. I will never forget what I experienced or what happened to my son. My strong, tall, and masculine son is now a petite and pitiable woman. A woman who is forever bound to his body. I choose to blame myself for this. For it is the only way I can comprehend such misfortune.”

“*Mama*,” Zoe began, “I had no idea that—”

“Please, do not offer me your sympathy... Shiaka. I am not the victim here. You two are. I apologize for making this about me, but I needed to confess the truth to someone. Perhaps now I can finally heal from these self-inflicted wounds.”

As Natasha wallowed in her sorrow, she stood up from the table, but before she could walk away, I thrust my body against hers, locking her in a hug. As our faces met, tears escaped my eyes.

“Offer me no sympathy?’ You’re sorry for ‘making this about you?’ *You’re my fucking mom!* I’m sorry I never knew about this. That we did *nothing* to help you. We lost our chance to use the VD when we could. So please, *Mama*, tell us what we can do to help you. Because no matter who I am, no matter if I am *fully* Shiaka, there will always be a part of me that cares about you.”

I waited in painful silence for far too long... before I felt a hand rest on my head. Of the scars across my body, the most sensitive one rested on my head. A small line of skin where hair no longer grew. As this tender part of me, the most tender area on my entire body, was stimulated, I looked forward to Natasha, where I saw tears trickling down her face.

“You are too good to me. I guess that means I raised you right. You are both brilliant, responsible people and I hope you can forgive this foolish and foul-hearted woman for harboring such vile desires. I ask that you forgive me and that... you both view me as a mother. That you, Zoe, are willing to remain my son. And that you, Shiaka, are willing to become my daughter. I see Zoe in both of you and... I don’t want to lose even a part of him. For he is all I have left.”

I tightened my grip around Natasha and felt a pair of long, strong arms wrap around me, before looking up and seeing Zoe. His glasses blocked his eyes, but I could tell he too was brought to tears.

“*Mama*, for as loving as the Kurokawas are, you are the woman who raised me, and... I never want you to leave my life. I would be honored if you accepted me as your daughter.”

“I know I have big shoes to fill, and I cannot say I will be half as good of a son as Zoe, but... I have accepted this life as my own. If you are willing to see me as your son, I would be more than happy to see you as a mother.”

As our words were shared, we remained locked in a silent hug, our faces all stained by tears, before Natasha— *Mama*—spoke to us again.

“Thank you. Thank you for everything you two have done... and everything you will do.”

Mama then began loosening her grip, urging Zoe and I to follow. She grabbed the plate of barely eaten stuffed walnut prunes and placed them into the fridge before looking over us, a genuine smile on her face.

“That’s right. I did not lose anything because of this. I gained an understanding for others on a level that few people on Earth can ever say they experienced. And... I gained a second child.”

She then stood there for a moment, looking out into space, filling her entire body with air, before exhaling and looking at the two of us.

“Shiaka, it is already late, and I would hate for Zoe to go driving at this hour. If you can, please stay the night. I’m sure I will have... *much* to talk to you about tomorrow morning.”

“Of course, *Mama*. I just need to let... Paz and Daisuke know.”

“You may call them mom and dad, for they are still your mother and father. While unorthodox, I suppose it is possible for people such as yourselves to have two mothers and fathers... Though, I should call Paz and see if she sees things similarly to me.”

Mama walked past us as she said that, looking almost as if she was on a light sedative with her open-mouthed smile and glazed eyes.

“I have much to consider this evening, so I will be in my room. I would offer you the couch, Shiaka, but I believe you and Zoe are more than familiar enough to share a room.”

“That... that’s true. Come on, let’s go Shiaka.”

Before I had the opportunity to say anything, Zoe grabbed me by the hand and guided me to his room. A sparse and regimented room with a simple bed, a desk, and a computer that ‘Shiaka’ helped him build a few years ago. The clothes were all kept in the closet, including the underwear and sock drawers, and aside from the rug over the center of his wooden floor, the only other fixture was a bookshelf. One with various textbooks, academic publications, novels, and a slightly cramped shelf with portable gaming systems and a few games. Not many though, as he borrowed most games from Maxine, Jad, or myself.

Zoe’s room had barely changed these past few months. Meaning it did not take me long to relax once I found these familiar sights, and after I reacquainted myself with Zoe’s bed.

“I was *not* expecting that,” I said as I spread my arms and legs out.

“I know,” Zoe said, joining me in bed. “Over the past few months, I have become *intimately* aware of the fact that *Mama* is a flawed person. She has the scars of trauma and is carrying around some hefty emotional baggage. I could tell that there were a lot of things bothering her, but I was more concerned with maintaining a sense of *normalcy* around her for these past two months.”

“And I thank you for that, Zoe. That was the right call at the time, but... my mental image of her just changed. I knew there was some deep unhappiness within her since we introduced her to the VD, but... I could not tell what it was.”

"She has an aptitude for hiding her emotions. I suppose that's how *I* developed such stoicness."

"As far as *I* can tell, that's pretty much the case. ...How do you feel about that idea she proposed? That I'm her daughter and that... we are of two families now."

"That would make things so *much* less awkward being around the Kurokawas. Even though I am not their daughter anymore, they still raised me and... I would be elated if I could call them Mom and Dad instead of Paz and Daisuke. While Haruki would... probably get a kick out of me becoming her brother. As for *Mama*, I have to wonder how they would feel about her and if they—"

"She had sex *as* all three of them, had sex *with* all three of them, and spent a day or two living all three of their lives. So they'd probably be *okay* with adding her to their family. Haruki can be a bit quirky, but Mom and Dad are some of the *nicest* people we will *ever* meet," I said as nonchalantly as I could manage.

"...Would you believe me if I said that I *intentionally* never looked at the notes for the 'adult swap parties?'"

"I can't really blame you for that," I snickered. "Things got *pretty spicy* at those things."

"...Whatever helps our families get closer, I suppose."

"On that note, do you wanna get married before the end of summer?"

Zoe fell out of the bed as I asked this question and looked up at me with what might have been the most horrified expression I had ever seen on his face.

"W-What the hell are you talking about?" He asked, his voice an octave higher than normal.

"We share more than just years of experiences, Zoe. We are connected on a deep level, and that connection *can* never be severed. It runs deeper than blood, deeper than friendship. Even as we grow older, even once you have lived more of your life as Zoe Xing than Shiaka Kurokawa, we will still be bonded together. Could you so much as *imagine* someone you would rather have as a partner in life? Someone you would rather take as a spouse? Because I sure can't."

"Shiaka, I—" Zoe began as he rose from the floor.

"But even without our unbreakable bond, I... I have fallen in love with you Zoe. Being in a different body, having different chemicals and hormones pumping through your brain, it can change the way you act and how you see things. We've observed that for months, and it was

obvious after our week-long spring break. My sense of self has changed from being in this body. I have accepted being smaller, being cute, and my lack of physical strength. I have accepted that I have a different range of emotions. And I have accepted that I am... physically attracted to you. Your handsome face, your firm muscles, your broad features, and *your dick*. With every passing day, this body feels more natural to me, and it becomes harder to remember what it felt like to be a tall, strong man.”

“...Shiaka, I feel the same way. I love you too, and... I feel like a different person than who I was back in May. I’m not the little girl who was beaten to near death. I’m not the January Girl who struggled to speak on her first day of school. The traumas and anxieties I once carried have... gone away as I learned to accept this new me. My sensory homunculus completely changed, the voice of my mind has grown deeper, and the thought of being a man for the rest of my life, while once horrifying... now fills me with a sense of comfort. I would be lying if I said that I would not go back to my original body if I could. But I am happy with who I am, and— as you said— it’s becoming hard to remember what it’s like to be a... tiny lady with big boobs.”

“Well, that’s definitely *one way* to describe your former body.”

“I was just trying to keep a light tone, *Shi-Shi*.”

“...Crap, I think I’m actually starting to *like* that nickname.”

“A-Anyway, were you serious about getting married before the end of summer? Because that’s about five weeks away and—”

“I said get *married*, not have a *wedding*. Weddings are a lot of work and money. But it costs a trip to the Cook County Clerk and \$60 to get a marriage license, which is the *more important* thing. And I’m *not* going to change my surname by the way, so no need to change IDs or anything. We *could* wait, but I see no reason why we *should*, so let’s just head down to the office on Monday and take care of everything!”

“Shiaka... I love how practical you can be. It’s something I need to get a better handle on. But before we move on with the next step in our relationship, *as a man*, I need to propose *my way*.”

Zoe then lowered himself to the floor, stood on one knee, and looked me straight in the eye.

“Shiaka Kurokawa, would you marry me? I... I didn’t buy a ring for this—”

“Eh, rings are old-fashioned, and while your delivery was pretty plain, I’d *love* to marry you... *on one condition!*”

I grabbed Zoe by his collar, brought his head close to mine, and whispered into his ear.

“I won’t marry you... until you *fuck* me.”

Zoe and I... gave our virginities to each other. On May 29th, to celebrate the end of our finals, to mark the end of our time at high school. In this room, on this bed, in the early afternoon, two months after we became boyfriend and girlfriend. It was sloppy, a bit panicked, but we were glad that we had our first time and, later that evening, we had our second. And it was *way* better.

Three days later, the VD malfunctioned, and while we had both enjoyed our new bodies in the most natural way, we had not gone full circle and had sex in these bodies. At first, we thought it was too soon to attempt it. But after the confession we just went through, it was clear that we were both ready.

I expected Zoe to jump on me at that suggestion. Instead... he laughed.

“*Oh my word*. I’m sorry Shiaka. I’m just remembering when Max— when *Barbara* asked us about our masturbation history back in November, and we both only ever did it once.”

“Per her request, we kept it up every day for the first two weeks of December, so we could... How did she describe it? ‘Suckle the plump juices from the pomegranate of knowledge?’”

“She even sent us tips to masturbate better... very detailed ones.”

“Before having us play *musical masturbators* because she thought it would bring us together if we knew what it felt like to cum in each other’s bodies. Which, in all fairness, it absolutely did. Even if Lynne *really* struggled with your dick.”

“The VD made us *such* perverts,” Zoe laughed. “I was reluctant at first, but... I learned the error of my ways quickly.”

“Same here, honey. Now then, *would you kindly* lock the door to give us some additional privacy?”

“Sure thing, sunshine.”

As Zoe headed over to the door, I pulled down my sundress and began folding it diligently, as I didn’t want it to get any unnecessary wrinkles. I had a spare set of clothes mixed with Zoe’s, *where they mingled with his scent*, but I didn’t want to *taint* such a nice dress.

As I finished my folding, I saw Zoe lift his undershirt, revealing, once again, his topless body. While his abs and pecs were still faint compared to what I’m used to, seeing him strip before giving me a ‘come hither’ look was enough to... how did Barbara describe it? Make my heart go *doki-doki*.

In return, he took off his glasses and glared at me, looking at my small curvaceous form, obscured only by my light lavender underwear. I smiled as I felt his desire, and he responded by taking off his belt, allowing his pants to slide down his ankles. With his body naked aside from his boxers, he sat on the bed beside me, eager to get started... But as I looked over the room, I realized this was *unacceptable*.

"Come on now, I get that we're having sex, but that does not give you an excuse to throw your clothes all about like a teenage boy."

"I... *am* a teenage boy."

"You know what I mean! *No sex until no mess!*"

"Yes, *miss!*"

Like a professional cleaner, Zoe began to pick up the clothes he scattered about, folding them one after another, before placing them in a pile on top of his bookshelf, right next to my sundress. He looked at me like a dog waiting for their favorite treat and, like any good owner, I gave him what he wanted, taking off my bra and allowing my breasts to hang out. While he got a generous look at them at the pool, there was something about seeing them fully free, unbound, and unrestrained, with my nipples already erect.

At this sight, Zoe slid down his boxers, freeing his dick. It shot forward a full eight inches, aimed directly at my face, and as I glanced at it, I brought my hands to my panty, slowly drifting it down my legs before flinging it on top of the pile. I laid down on the bed, presenting myself before Zoe. Though I could not see much past my breasts, I could feel a dampness persisting between my legs, meaning this *should* be nice and smooth.

Once I was in position, I saw Zoe looming over me, fire in his hazel eyes, his hands on my legs, and his dick inches away from me. I racked my brain for one final comment before we began, but before I could say something, I felt it enter me, sending a wave of foreign warmth through my being. However, it did not slide in as easily as I hoped.

"Hey, uh, Zoe, could you try—"

As I attempted to offer pointers, I felt Zoe's penis wiggle about inside me, navigating my being, and leaving me unable to speak as it went in deeper and deeper. Though I had explored my body in great detail, I *never* went this deep, and as Zoe continued to explore further, my mind flashed back to our first time together. To the *wall* I felt.

"Z-Zoe, I don't know if I'm okay with—"

"Aw, is the *dominant* one in our relationship asking me to be gentle?"

Words escaped me as I tried to formulate a response as I was... scared. Even when standing next to Zoe, I never felt this small. Here, with his dick inside me, the head pressing against my cervix, I felt like I was small enough to fit in his palm. I worried that he would embrace his *inner man* and use me to satiate his own pleasure, regardless of my feelings. That he would *teach me a lesson* for being so bossy to him. Instead, he moved closer to me, bringing his body on top of mine in order to kiss me.

"You are so cute when you're *happy*," he said, less than an inch from my face.

Before I could find the words, he brought his hands to my breasts and began brushing his fingers across them, dancing his thumbs atop my nipples. As he began, my breathing grew heavy, my face reddened, and my vision blurred. Zoe knew my body better than anyone, and he knew exactly how to... stimulate it.

My body was covered in scar tissue. It was mostly concentrated around my abdomen, but the scars spread across my head, breasts and limbs as well. The scars fully recovered, and while they brought me no pain, they were more sensitive than the rest of my body. Touching them made my body flinch, heightened every sensation, and proved to trigger both a panic response... and one of pleasure. I discovered that I could stimulate these parts of me to give myself greater pleasure, yet I was always reluctant to do so.

Zoe, meanwhile, was trying to use this quirk with my body to grant me greater pleasure. While this brought her distraught due to her PTSD, she knew this was not the case for other people inside her body. That these patches of scar tissue could function as erogenous zones. She was being kind in touching me there, for she was trying to offer me a glorious magnitude of pleasure. However... I could not take it.

"T-This is too much for me. P-Please take it slower until I—"

Before I could finish that thought, Zoe moved his hands away from my chest and adopted a slower pace. I felt a high-pitched squeak escape my lips as I recognized this new pace, only for Zoe to silence me with another kiss.

"Sorry about that. I kind of lost myself for a moment."

"T-Thank you. ...Y-You can try going a *little* faster, let me just use my hips a little..."

Zoe did as I requested, adopting a tempo that was more my speed and, instead of touching my breasts, he brought his lips to mine. It was relaxing compared to what he just sent me through with the 'breast play,' but it was still enough to make me feel like I was floating through a sea of clouds. As such, it was no surprise that I was quick to reach a climax, spraying a morsel of fluid

onto Zoe. He laughed as he realized what he had done— *that he made his girlfriend cum*— but he did not stop.

Instead, he increased the pace slightly, and moved his penis around, as if he was searching for something, staring into my eyes all the while. As I let out a flinch, he smiled, and thrust forward. Instantly, it felt like every motion of his penis was giving me an additional 50% of pleasure and, after a mere few seconds, I felt myself orgasm yet again.

I let out a meek “thank you” as Zoe brought me to this second high. I stared at his smiling face, reflecting my own, but before I could lean in for another kiss, he moved away from me. He stood up, slid his penis out of me, filling me with a sudden sense of emptiness.

Before I could think to ask him what he was doing, he brought a hand to his penis, still as hard as it was at the start of our session, and dripping wet with my juices. He thrust his hand up and down and, seconds later, he sprayed a teaspoon’s worth of cum on his bedroom’s off-white walls.

After Zoe looked at his newly made mess, he let out a small laugh before looking at me, a nervous smile on his face.

“So, uh, sorry about being a bit rough there. Did you enjoy yourself, Shi-Shi?”

“Yeah... Once it got going, it was probably the best *sensory* experience of my life. ...But why did you pull out like that?”

“Sorry about that. I sort of panicked at the last minute, and— let me grab some tissues to keep it from dripping and—”

“Wipe it up and come lay down with me, you *dork*.”

Zoe did as I requested, lapping up the cum with some tissues, before joining me under the covers.

“So, what was that pulling out thing about—”

“Well, I didn’t want to... *cream you*? Is that the term?”

“I guess. But why are you worried about that?”

“Well, I forgot to put a condom on before we—”

“After Haruki heard I lost my virginity, she put me on birth control, so you can bust inside me as much as you want.”

“Are you sure about that? It was kind of scary the first time—”

“It’s just *cum*, Zoe. The worst thing cum can do is transmit STIs and cause pregnancies. And I *know* you’re not carrying anything. Besides, I... am a little curious how it feels just... *gushing* inside me.”

“*Oh, make up your mind!* Are you a pervert or not, Shiaka? You were practically begging me to act gentle, but now you’re asking me to creampie you!”

“I just want to try a full traditional experience, okay?!”

“Only if you lead next time. You’re cute when you’re submissive, but I think I like you better when you’re taking charge.”

“Even in bed, when you are supposed to be at your manliness?”

“To be honest, I wasn’t really sure what I was doing there, but—”

“Bullshit, you got me to orgasm twice, so you had to be—”

“It’s just *you*, Shiaka. I remember the first time, where *you* barely needed anything to get off.”

“I... I guess I just need to be a bit tougher and get a bit more... resistant to people touching me in my most sensitive spots.”

“Don’t fret, sunshine,” Zoe said as he placed his hands against my scarred abdomen. “I’ll do *everything* I can to help build your tolerance. I know there’s a dom within you. But if you can’t get her out, that won’t be the worst thing. I mean, you *are* awfully cute when you squeak like that.”

“S-Squeak? I don’t *squeak*!”

“*You do*, Shi-Shi. And it’s pretty hot.”

Curious about what Zoe meant, I began brushing my hands against the most tender part of my torso, pinching it slightly and allowing myself to produce whatever noises my body wanted. A high pitched gasp escaped my lips and, as I played it back in my mind, I realized what Zoe meant. That was a *squeak*, and it was *pretty hot*.

“Oh? I could use this to my advantage... *somehow*.”

“Let’s save it for when we’re husband and wife, dear. After everything hubby’s been through, he wants to go to bed.”

“Don’t call yourself *hubby*! ...At least not until we’re married.”

Zoe laughed at my enthusiasm, brought a hand to a scarred section of my leg and, seconds later, shut his eyes, falling into a deep sleep.

It was only 21:00, but I understood why he was so tired. He was physically exhausted after the pool, mentally exhausted from all of that wackadoo family crap, and emotionally exhausted after losing his male virginity. While not as tired, I could feel the same fatigues afflict my body, so I decided to join him. I turned off the lights and joined him under the covers, placing his limp arm over my body as I laid on my side, looking at Zoe as he slept.

After tonight... I felt a lot more confident about my future. When the VD malfunctioned, I felt that I lost everything. My flawless transcript that would get me into nearly any college I desired. My tall masculine body— one practically built for success in the world of business. The strong and composed persona I had built with my appearance and demeanor. It was all gone, and if I wanted to achieve the same things I once desired... it would be an uphill battle as, to quote my boyfriend, a ‘tiny lady with big boobs.’ One with a great transcript and a State support system that I was previously not entitled to, but... it changed the vision I had for my life and now. Even all these months later, I was unsure what I wanted to be.

I doubt I could command the same respect I desired as an executive given the sheer excess of discriminatory *fuckwits* who exist in the world of business. And I knew I lacked the experience to continue this life as a programmer. However, the more time passed, the more I realized that, whatever I did with this new life of mine, I wanted to do it with him. With the man lying beside me, breathing slowly, a smile on his handsome mug. My friend. My boyfriend. My fiancé. And, in less than two days... *my husband*.

We were forever bound on a deep level. A level that few people in this world would ever be able to achieve. And through this bond, I knew we could do anything we set our hearts on.

Aftermath

Within a room cast in darkness, a pair of monitors shined. The first one showed five video feeds playing at once, its interface similar to a security camera system.

The first feed displayed Jad and Lynne resting in the same bed, his nose brushing against his mother’s hair as they slept. The second featured Barbara, her limbs cast out in random directions as she laid under her covers, a content look on her visage. The third depicted Maxine,

dressed in her felt pink pajama bottoms and a T-shirt, as she hugged a meter-long plush shark with a crescent-shaped mouth. The fourth showed Tyler, dressed only in his boxers, as he laid against the bed, the sheets only covering half of his body. While the final feed presented Zoe and Shiaka, facing one another as they slept, barely an inch between them.

The second monitor showed a dark interface. The left side was home to a file hierarchy, the upper center and right was dedicated to code, while the bottom portion contained a variety of fields. Empty boxes to be populated, dropdown menus to select, boxes to check, and a small vertical preview window depicting a list of variables.

```
ScenarioName = "Verde's Doohickey - Session Extra"  
ScenarioID = 039872801  
FileID = Jad_Novus_4361726f.char  
CharHash = 132037_24  
UserType = "Character"  
NameFirst = "Jad"  
NameLast = "Novus"  
BodyBase = 446572616373  
BodyAge = 18  
BodyModifier = 5P444S777Z61  
BodyOccupant = "Caroline Steticks"  
TransformationType = "Body Swap"  
BodySynchronisity = 73%  
Gender = "Male"  
Sex = "Male"  
Species = "Homo Sapien"
```

Before these two monitors sat a woman dressed in green. She stared at the screens before her, darting her mouse across her second monitor as she brought up more and more information, before leaning back in her chair.

Woman in Green: "Now this... *this* is one sexy future. If I did not know any better, I'd swear this was crafted by my hand. But I guess the AI is just that sophisticated."

As the woman in green mused over the displays before her, a pair of footsteps echoed from behind. She turned around in her chair and was greeted with a woman in red.

Woman in Red: "Are you going to do anything to help these people?"

Woman in Green: "I see no reason why I should intervene. They seem pretty happy to me."

Woman in Red: “They might *seem* happy, but are you honestly okay with this? A child is now an adult, an adult is now a child, and a mother and daughter are now an incestuous son and mother.”

Woman in Green: “It *is* a weird situation, but do you think things would be *better* if they just suddenly woke up in their original bodies? They’ve accepted their new bodies as their bodies, accepted new names, new roles, new relationships, new sexualities, even new genders. In just 76 days, they have become *new people* and it would be *cruel* to rob them of their new identities in order to make things ‘normal’ again. Plus, I’m not going to give some transgirls biologically female bodies and then take that shit away from them. That’d be a dick move.”

Woman in Red: “...You could also restore the VD’s power and make it indestructible. You could give them the power to *choose* who they want to be.”

Woman in Green: “I *could*. But that would lead us to the same problem. If given the opportunity to undo this, they would *almost certainly* choose to go ‘back to normal.’ And while they *could* have more body swapping funsies after that, chances are they would put the VD in storage someplace for being ‘too dangerous.’ Which *completely* defeats the purpose of giving them a body swapper.”

Woman in Red: “You’re certainly full of foresights. I take it that you also ran an estimate on what their future lives would be.”

Woman in Green: “*Of course*. I might have been out of the game for a while, but I still remember the basics. And trust me when I say that their futures are pretty bright. Lots of love, a few kids, the good stuff.”

Woman in Red: “In that case, shall we allow this Scenario to operate independently?”

Woman in Green: “Yeah. At least for the moment. I don’t want to change the lives of these folks, but I think it would be *interesting* if they met their alter egos.”

Woman in Red: “I shall note that as a potential opportunity for *The 2.0 Initiative*.”

Woman in Green: “How big is that document by now?”

Woman in Red: “Over fifty pages so far, and most of the notes need to be expanded upon. This summer is going to be *more* than just bizarre.”

Woman in Green: “Already? Heh. *Now I’m getting excited*.”

Woman in Red: “Please contain your excitement. After all, *we’re just getting started*.”

Fortsetzung Folgt In...

Verde's Doohickey 2.0: Sensational Summer Romp