

THE ISLAND



Adrian's fortune, as mentioned, did not derive entirely from his own wealth. Years earlier, he had married **Victoria Van Albrecht**, the sole heir to one of Europe's oldest shipping and logistics dynasties. By the time the inheritance passed to her, the family's assets were spread across dozens of countries and worth several billion dollars.

She was fully aware of her husband's fascination with body modifications. The arrangement between them had never been particularly traditional. Their marriage was open from the beginning, and Victoria herself possessed tastes that many outsiders would have found unconventional. She enjoyed the atmosphere Adrian had created on the island and appreciated being surrounded by beautiful women who attended to the couple's needs. Officially, she showed little interest in the details of Adrian's research programs. She preferred the results to the process. As long as herself and Adrian stayed entertained, she rarely asked questions.

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Life was fun for her, too, but eventually she got bored. For years, Victoria had watched other women being remade in Adrian's labs. Waitresses became blonde dolls, cleaners became human zebras, older women became younger, softer, more useful versions of themselves. At first, she had enjoyed watching from a distance. Then the novelty faded. She became curious. Then jealous. She had always been kinky in private, and a part of her wanted to experiment the power of the process on herself, just without losing control the way Rebecca had. One evening, while the two of them were sitting on a terrace overlooking the sea, she finally brought it up. "What if I wanted to... try it?" Adrian smiled.

"I've been wondering how long it would take before you asked."

"I am serious." "So am I."

Not a servant identity. Not a loss of memory. Just herself, in a new body.

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Over the following weeks, the project became almost a game between them.

Victoria collected photographs from old magazines, fashion shows, royal weddings, and social media accounts belonging to daughters of Gulf billionaires.

Eventually she settled on a concept. Dark hair. Honey-colored skin. Large expressive brown eyes.

The first few days after the procedure were far more unsettling than Victoria had expected. She had spent months designing the new appearance and approving every genetic modification, yet actually watching her body carry out those instructions felt very unsettling. Her complexion quickly deepened into a warm golden tone. Her hair darkened week after week until no trace of blonde remained. The proportions of her face were still largely unchanged. Adrian was delighted. He followed the changes almost obsessively, often studying her face for several seconds before grinning with satisfaction.

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More than once he told her that nobody would ever mistake her for a Van Albrecht anymore.

She begged Adrian to stop with those comments, but surprisingly she liked hearing it deep down. For the first time in her life, she was no longer immediately recognizable as Victoria Van Albrecht. And she loved it.

Looking at herself in the mirror was becoming an increasingly surreal experience. The transformation was everything she had asked for, yet there were moments when she found herself laughing at the absurdity of it all. She was a pretty European heiress spending millions of dollars to genetically reinvent herself into a Middle Eastern beauty. Had somebody suggested such a thing to her ten years earlier, she would have considered them insane.

Yet every time she experimented in bed with her new body with Adrian, that doubt faded a little more.

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The novelty of her sensations made the experience feel like a new relationship.

Exactly what he wanted. What reassured her was that, beneath the changing exterior, she still felt entirely like herself. Her memories, tastes, ambitions, and habits were unchanged. Only the packaging had changed. And as the last traces of her old appearance disappeared, like her hair turning jet black, she found herself becoming unexpectedly excited by that fact rather than frightened by it. The feeling was irrational, perhaps even childish, but she could not deny it.

She had stepped down from most of her duties related to her companies but still occasionally replied to emails and joined meetings with her camera turned off.

A few months later, Adrian hosted one of his regular dinners on the island with old friends, investors, and longtime associates who had known Victoria for years.

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When she entered the terrace on Adrian's arm, elegantly dressed, her jet black hair styled in silky waves, conversation noticeably slowed for a moment.

Adrian smiled. "Everyone, I'd like you to meet my new lover, Yasmin."

Some of the newer guests accepted the introduction without question. To them she simply looked like a wealthy Middle Eastern woman in her twenties, elegant and impeccably dressed. The older members of the group knew better. They recognized the posture, the dry sense of humor and the way she reached for her wine glass with her left hand. One or two exchanged amused glances but played along. That was part of the entertainment. To Adrian's surprise, she appeared to enjoy it just as much. Guests would occasionally ask where she was from. Rather than answer directly, she would offer vague replies that only made them more curious. The novelty should have worn off after a few weeks, yet she seemed increasingly comfortable inhabiting the role she had created for herself.



One afternoon Victoria sat alone in front of a vanity mirror, dressed in the maid uniform Adrian had insisted suited her “new look.”

Her dark hair fell over her shoulders in soft waves. Her skin carried a warm olive tone. Her features had become difficult to place. Guests guessed Spanish, Lebanese, Brazilian, Argentine. Nobody ever guessed Dutch anymore. Some days Adrian even had her helping the housekeeping staff for an hour or two as a joke between them. Under the name *Maria*, she blended in surprisingly well among the Hispanic employees. The only thing that betrayed her was her complete lack of practical skills.

Normally she found the whole thing amusing. That afternoon she didn't. At some point the game had stopped feeling like a costume. She suddenly realized she couldn't remember the last time anyone on the island had called her Victoria. Her throat tightened. When Adrian entered the room, she was still staring at her reflection. “I want you to reverse it.”



Adrian had assured her that the next procedure would finally restore some of her old appearance. Not everything, of course. Victoria had long since accepted that she was not returning to the Dutch heiress she had once been. But at least the hair, he had said. The blonde hair would come back.

Instead, when Victoria woke up and reached for it, she immediately knew something was wrong. It felt thicker. Far thicker.

And when she pulled a lock in front of her eyes, she found not blonde hair but the darkest shade she had ever seen on herself, almost black. Worse, it was no longer straight. Soft curls fell around her face and shoulders.

The nurses refused to answer any questions. By the time she finally saw a mirror, her irritation had turned into genuine anger.



Victoria stared at her reflection for what felt like an hour. The procedure had done the exact opposite of what Adrian had promised.

The woman looking back at her was beautiful. That was not the problem. The problem was that she looked even less like Victoria Van Albrecht than she had before.

Her skin had darkened again. Not dramatically, but enough to be obvious. The elegant "Arab princess" look she had carefully designed months earlier had drifted somewhere else entirely. Her features looked softer now, her eyes larger, her hair impossibly dark and wavy. The overall effect felt distinctly South Asian.

She spent the entire afternoon waiting for Adrian.

When she finally arrived to pick her up at the island's beautician for at dinner, she barely sat down before speaking.