

It was hard to explain, but looking like this had started to feel *good*.

Sure, it felt strange to be a woman, and a bimbo on top of that. My every step drew stares. My every jiggle belonged to the hungry eyes of the men around me. I knew what I was to everyone, what I ought to be to myself. But even that shame and that embarrassment didn't change what I was to Ash. You never knew what being beautiful is until you're beautiful to someone you love. You never feel as confident and gorgeous as I did unless you have someone to admire you.

Maybe I didn't like being this girl, but my body loved itself. It loved to luxuriate in a feeling of confidence and perfection, loved that way that Ash looked at and touched it. Her hands, caressing me, making even my sides seem like sensitive and filthy parts of my body. Oh, how she made me shudder...

My legs practically spread on their own when she laid me down. She had eaten me out twice, or at least eaten me out all the way twice. I knew that my male brain tended to think about lesbianism in very male ways, but it was hard to consider her licks and laps as anything but teases when something else got me there. But even then, boy did she know how to tease. It was like the whole of my being had been trapped in that little nub, as if I only existed within the bean she was so expertly stimulated. I wanted to be nothing more than the parts of me she touched, wanted to be nothing more than the woman she loved.

And then, afterwards, I'd remember that I wasn't a woman at all. Not really. But sometimes I had myself pretty convinced.

I had myself so convinced that I took her strapon with a smile on my face.

I knew it was a piece of plastic but it still felt like it was her as it was inside of me, felt as if I was feeling the intimacy of my crush being in the deepest parts of my most sensitive things. I would moan and cry, whine and beg for more. I would ask her to go faster, to go harder, to kiss me more and never pull her face from mine.

And now, she wanted me to meet her parents. And somehow that seemed like the most daunting thing of all.

Go figure.

I looked in the mirror at a tight red dress, clinging to me tight while still looking formal. It had sleeves and shoulders, even if it still had cleavage. It was tight, but it went almost to my knees.

And of course, I was wearing heels. Five inches instead of six though. I had to look a bit serious.

I stared at myself, wondering what they'd think of me, wondering if I should pick another dress, preening about my appearance as if the world turned on which color lipstick I wore. But I knew that was just my bimbo brain talking. Besides, it was easier to be nervous about colors and shades than it was to be worried about in-laws.

In-laws...

I was really thinking of this in those terms. Did I intend to stay this way? To marry Ash? Yeah, imagine me in a white wedding dress...

The crazy thing was that I could, as long as I was next to her.

Stupid love. I wasn't thinking straight.

But whatever I intended, I needed to make a good first impression. So I minced out the room, watching the bounce of my chest as I moved like a driver in danger of

giving himself highway hypnosis. I knew why people stared at them. I felt the same way. Sometimes I had to make my own eyes look up.

“Wow...you look beautiful!”

I looked to Heather, finding her on her usual couch and sipping her usual wine as the tv played. But she must not have cared much about the show, because she got up to inspect me while it went on playing.

“Do I?” I asked, putting my hands out at my sides. Instead of replying with words, she just stepped forward and hugged me. “Ash is a very lucky girl. And while I have to take most of the credit for you...that’s a very nice dress. You did a good job picking it.”

I opened my mouth to explain that red was my color before stopping myself as I realized:

I liked her. I liked talking to her, and liked hugging her and liked having her in the house. Heather wasn’t an annoyance.

Heck, we had banter!

“Now, there is one last thing before you go though...” she said, taking the magic paper with my grades and assignments on it and making it blank once again. She folded it so it’d fit into my purse and then tucked it inside.

“There’s no assignment on there?”

“No. Think of this as more of a field trip. Attendance is the only rubric” she explained. “It’s also your last assignment.”

I mouthed the words “last assignment” as she looked me over one more time and then put a hand on my shoulder.

“Thomas...Victoria...I’ve always wanted a daughter. And obviously this didn’t start because of that, but I’m glad I got one for a short amount of time. And with your lessons all learned, I hope things are much better with you as a son.”

“They...they will be” I promised, though I wasn’t sure which one would come to pass.

Ash seemed less excited than Heather.

She picked me up without a word, looked to my dress without much enthusiasm and took until halfway through the drive to notice the concerned expression on my face.

“I’m just...nervous.”

“Your parents are nice” I shrugged, having had some idea of them from my world. She gave me a look as if wondering how I knew that and I quickly added. “They obviously must be, if they raised a girl as cool as you.”

“They are nice...” she agreed as we pulled up to the mansion. “Just not cool.”

I wasn’t sure what that meant, but she was soon coming around to open my door for me, and I thought it best not to ask.

She led me into the foyer, where I found two older people waiting for us. They looked to be the pinnacle of proper wealth, old money that knew how to handle its appearances. They were polite, but that was about it. I even managed to notice the slightest chink in the mother’s well mannered armor when she first saw me.

She looked me over with an expression worse than any leering boy.

The father stepped forward and gave us a nod. “You must be...Victoria, then?”

“Tori” I smiled, extending my hand as if I was still a guy, expecting my girl’s date to want a firm shake. He looked down like it was dirty and gave a halfhearted and confused shake. “And you two?”

“Mr and Mrs Jones” said the mother decisively.

I gave a meek nod.

The pair of them went off to the dining room, leaving Ash to come up to me, hand on my back. Something about her touching me there, just about my butt, brought me such comfort. But I still knew something was up.

“They’re being better than I thought” she explained.

I gave her a look and let her lead the way to dinner, where her parents were already sitting. With them at the heads of the table and only two chairs placed, Ash and I couldn’t sit next to each other.

So I minced opposite her and took my seat.

Her mother gave a look to both Ash and her father before looking to me.

“So, I hear you’re a *pageant* girl? What’s that like?”

“Um, fun. I’m sort of outgrowing it, I think. But I enjoyed it while it was happening.”

“Ash’s mother actually does something similar” noted her father. “Show dogs.”

“Oh...that’s interesting!”

I must have spoken with a bit too much pep, which would make sense since I was trying my best to act enthused. They looked at me like I was an idiot and then went back to their meals.

I gave Ash a look, but she didn’t catch it, her own eyes downcast from me.

“You really do have a lovely daughter” I offered, looking down to my own plate and idly teasing it with my fork.

“We know. A troublemaker though. We try to keep her away from bad influences” said her father.

They were talking to me, perhaps even talking about me...

But they weren't looking at me. And when her mother finally did spare me a look, it wasn't one I would have wanted.

“So, a pageant girl, newly retired: what are her prospects? Besides marrying rich, of course.”

“Well...I don't know. My family is pretty well set themselves so I have plenty of time to think it over.”

“Oh...used to being looked after” she dryly noted.

“Mother” snapped Ash, though whatever defensiveness or zest had caused that outburst was quickly curtailed by a remonstrating glare.

“I'm saying that I have plenty of options open to me. My intelligence and my parent's connections, with the time to pursue whatever I want” I tried to explain, hoping that it sounded very well thought.

But, even though I sounded like I had a good head on my shoulders, her mother didn't look at it. She just glanced to my chest with disdain.

“Do you value connections then?”

“Honey, I'm sure she's just saying...” offered her husband, as if jumping to my aid. But one look to me was all it took to shut him up. He must have forgotten who he was talking about for a moment.

They went back to eating and I did the same. I wasn't sure what else to do. All my looks to Ash went unanswered, and I couldn't bring myself to mount a defense when they were practically radiating derision towards me. I couldn't explain it. Even before they saw me, they had hard looks, and now they wouldn't hear me out.

"So how long have you been...*cough cough*...'dating' Ashley?" asked her mother when she had finally cleared her plate of all which could stall this conversation.

"Almost two weeks. I was actually surprised she wanted me to meet you so early."

"Oh, she was a bit reluctant, actually. But I insisted. Ash has a bad history of choosing...*unworthy* girls."

Wow.

Ash was still silent but if she wasn't going to defend me, I would.

"Well then, I guess it's good she found me" I answered with a bit of sass. Enough, apparently, to make her father finally look my way.

"And how did she find you? On one of her *apps*?" she asked, the word a hiss. Clearly this was a woman who held a low opinion of this century's dating customs.

"We went to school together and then we reconnected it...at a...bar" I told her. Saying we met at a club would just play right into her hand.

"Oh, so you knew of her before."

"I did."

"And you knew about her family, no doubt..."

"Mother..." came Ash's rebuke. Only this time, it was barely a whisper.

“I actually know your stepmother” said her father, knowing that he needed to change the subject. “School board and things like that. You clearly take a lot after her.”

“Oh yes, *just like* her” offered Mrs. Jones.

I turned slowly towards her with a glare which tactically growled the word ‘bitch.’

“What does that mean?”

“It means that my daughter is the heir to vast wealth and instead of cavorting with others in her ilk, who engage with her on a real level, she prefers the company of fun women who have only one thing in mind.”

“You...you think I’m...you think...” I gasped. “I love your daughter!”

They all went quiet at that, Ash most of all.

I thought of all the things we’d done together, all the words, all the moments. Sure, we had hooked up a lot. We couldn’t keep our hands off each other. But that was just to fill time between sweet talking, not the other way around. She was with me because she liked me, not my body.

Of course, my body was with me every step of the way, and she knew she’d get both together...

I stood up and stormed off, my jiggling mocking my every step with a reminder of what I was, of what they thought I was.

I was waiting for Ash to follow, but she didn’t. Not until I was waiting in the foyer for a few terrible moments. When she finally arrived, I was trying my hardest not to cry, and was so hurt that I couldn’t even write it off as estrogen.

“They...they think I’m-”

“Can you blame them? I mean, look at you” she shrugged apologetically.

“They’re always like this. And I’m sorry, but you fit the description.”

“I- are you listening to yourself! You didn’t say anything! You didn’t defend me! I mean, you’re not just with me because-”

“Tori, come on. Calm down.”

“No, I’m not calming down! Do you love me or not?”

Ash frowned. I could have read anything into that frown. It could have meant disappointment or hurt or awkwardness or a million things, good or bad. But there was only one thing I noticed about it.

It wasn’t a “Yes.”

I turned on my heel and stormed off.

“Tori!” she called after me as I left the mansion. I didn’t care what she had to say. I didn’t care if I was wrong, caught up in young love and a crush I’d been nurturing for too long. I didn’t care if I was right, and she was just so beset by this whole ordeal that she didn’t say what she ought to. I just needed the time to be angry. I needed to be offended.

I needed to lick my wounds after being treated like nothing but a gold digger.

Since she was my ride, I walked out front and sat on a bench in their garden, looking into a small koi pond as tears slowly added to it. I had gained so much stock in myself and my new life from the way that Ash looked at me.

Beautiful.

Gorgeous.

Pretty.

But the way her parents looked at me made it all crumble, made me doubt her and made me realize how the world saw this body.

Bimbo.

Gold digger.

Whore.

I looked at my reflection, thinking of those inescapable words attached to it, as the water around it began to shift. The reflection of the night sky was replaced with a replay of the scenes inside, of the doubtful and disgusted looks on their faces, of my humiliation and hurt.

Then, the scene shifted again.

The projection onto the water was replaced with one of the first time I met Heather, when my father had introduced me to her. I saw familiar looks on her face. Hope. Excitement. Nervous optimism. I had felt the same way tonight.

But then I saw those same looks of doubt. Of judgement. Of prejudice and annoyance that left no space for assumption to be proven wrong.

They were on my face.

I was looking at Heather the way that they looked at me and as I stood in shock, my purse fell from the bench. A piece of paper fell out and I glanced at it with an idea of what it would say. But I unfolded it nonetheless and read the new words.

Final Exam:

The final thing a bimbo must grapple with is that she can never be anything else. Never a brain, never a love, never a mother, never a person. They are judged before they are known. No one trusts the best part of their life: their love. They can't even believe it. They always have to wonder whether they're loved solely for their body, whether they're being used like a toy.

And no matter how hard they try, they will never be accepted by those that called them gold digger...

Or will they?

As I read the last words, I heard someone clear their throat behind me.

"Before you say, I didn't set this up. I just knew it'd happen and-"

And practically lunged into a hug with her.

"I'm so sorry! Heather, I'm sorry. I had no idea...I'm so sorry..."

"I know you are, honey..." she said, patting my back and shushing you. "And I'm sorry it didn't work out. Young love...sometimes it can be blinding. You can keep trying if you like though, stay in this life...it's always been up to you. There's just one thing you have to do first."

I sniffled and looked up to her. "What's that?"

She smiled and cupped her hand, summoning a glittering nebula of light and power within it. "Magic is passed down to the girls in my family. The daughters. It's not genetic, or anything as scientific as that. All you have to do is call me your mother, and

you'll be able to make reality whatever you want it to be. If that's alright with you" she asked hopefully. "If not I can do it mys-

"You're my mother!"

The slow crawl of the smile across her face was so nice to watch after the scene in the mansion, warming my heart in a way I didn't know I needed. She was right. I was so uncertain about Ash now, so unsure now that the haze of love had demanded some clarity. We had fun. But did she love me? Was it fair for me to make her love someone like me, who maybe wasn't real.

But those thoughts were replaced by a feeling that overtook me, as I slowly realized something had changed within. I lifted my own hand-

"Whoa."

I had the magic. I could make reality whatever I wished.

"You can turn yourself into a boy. I can turn you back whenever you like, if you want some mommy-daughter time. You could do whatever you wish. Stay this way. Go back. Find an in between. But I'll love you no matter what."

I looked to her, and then to the mansion. Her, Ash, me, my life...there was so much to think about. I had hated being a bimbo so much at first, but now I realized that I might end up vacationing in this body. I wanted Ash to be happy. I wanted her to be out and living her life. I wanted the douchey bullies to be brought down a peg.

Feeling all that, feeling the magic, thinking of the old world but with a few nice changes, I visualized the reality I wanted. But whatever world I ended up in, I had a lovely stepmother, one I'd be glad to share it with.

And I was glad to have learned that.

I closed my eyes, raised my fingers and-

SNAP!