

## Annamaria Part 6 – The Fashion Show

Summary: Annamaria prepared for a big fashion show, but in the process asks herself some deep questions about her job, and her love life, with a special guest cameo by an Accessverse favorite.

Tags: Taur, Multi Breast, Multi Head, Multi Arm, Multi Leg, Long Leg, Conjoinment, Lost Limbs, Long Neck, Double Face, Romance, Slice of Life, Fashion

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“Annamaria!”

“YAAAH!” I screamed, shooting up from my nap. My hair was frazzled from being matted down on top of my desk.

“You were asleep,” my “assistants” Daisy and Noelle said in their creepy monotone.

“N-no I wasn’t! I’m awake! Just taking a break.”

“You were asleep for an hour and a half,” Daisy said. “We counted.”

“You... counted?”

Noelle began rattling off numbers in a dull drone. “Five thousand four hundred and fifty-three seconds, five thousand four hundred and fifty-four seconds. Five thousand and...”

“OK! OK!” I protested, waving my hands in front of my face. “Just, don’t tell Lucien...”

“Lucien knows...” Daisy and Noelle said. “Lucien knows everything...”

“Well... that’s... creepy.”

“Lucien only cares that the work gets done. Otherwise, you may sleep, eat, engage in sexual relations...”

“Can you PLEASE stop that!” My right head protested. My left was still waking up and yawned deeply.

“So, then if it’s OK to sleep, why are you waking me up?”

“The work,” Noelle said.

“It must get done,” said Daisy.

They turned and pointed toward a large pile of paperwork that had built up on a table near the door of my office.

“W-what? Is that all mine?” I said, sweat dripping down my matted hair.

“Lucien’s winter fashion show is coming up,” Noelle said with a vacant stare in her eyes.

“The whole office has more clients than usual,” said Daisy, looking at me while craning her neck almost backward.

“The work must get done.” they said in unison...

This was practically a scene from a horror movie.

"The work must get done... the work must get done... the work must get done..." Noelle and Daisy droned.

"OK!" I said. "I get it! I'll do the work. I just... can I nap just a tiny bit longer?"

Noelle and Daisy just stared at me in silence.

"Fine... send the first model in."

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This was going to be my life for the foreseeable future. Mutant models coming in, examining the mission statement, and crafting them a magnificent outfit that would make everyone drool over Lucien's brand. To be honest, it was a bit... I don't know... numb?

Like, don't get me wrong, I still loved my work. But people were coming in and out of my office like products on a conveyor belt. Maybe Laura was right. This was a far cry from the personal work I did back at the shop. I mean, I tried to make it as personal as I possibly could but there was only so much I could do.

My first model was a mutant with excessively long legs. She could barely fit in my office. Lucien wanted to make her attire feel "like a tree in winter, but beautiful not dead." I asked if they meant like a Christmas tree and they said "No, you know, like a real tree."

...I have no idea what they are talking about sometimes.

I managed though. I drew up a plan to make a dress that was partially see through, that would fall down all along her long legs. It would be laced with veins of dark fabric and accentuated with sequins, making it appear somewhat like a circle of bare leaf branches covered in snow. The attire would continue up to her top, which would be lots of fluffy white furs, making her appear to be the cloud that was raining down around her long luxurious legs.

Lucien absolutely loved it, though Lucien always seems... a little high so I'm not sure if they even quite got what I was going for.

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My second model was a peculiar challenge. The model herself was... in Lucien's words... very minimalistic. She was simply a pair of breasts and a head. No arms. No legs. Wonderful hair though, long and luxurious.

She was carried around by another mutant, a mutant with a long neck and a head with a face on the front and back. This mutant was... well... complicated. She showed no emotion. Did not talk. Did not eat. I waved my hands in front of her faces and got absolutely nothing.

The model said that this other mutant was so dedicated to her job that she knew her so well they could basically talk without speaking, responding to requests even before they were made.

I didn't quite believe here... but models were quirky... you know?

You know, you think you've seen everything in this world, and then sometimes life just surprises you. I had certainly never met another mutant like this before. I wanted to just spend the whole day talking, asking her what her life was like. Remember, I got into this business because I was just so interested in the mutations of others, a "mutant fanatic" if you will.

But I suppose I was not a mutant fanatic anymore. Now I was a fashion designer, and a fashion designer had a job to do.

I ended up utilizing some of Lucien's tech for this one. It was a very interesting process because... well... I couldn't imagine actually asking her to wear what I was going to make. It was just for show, and only for show.

I designed a bodysuit for her assistant made out of cloth that was very black in low light, but very reflective in high light. For her, I developed a dress with wispy strands. My goal was to make her look somewhat like a Jellyfish. We would use projectors to place ocean scenes over her assistant and she would look like she was floating through the water on the runway.

It looked great, unpractical but great. Within no time I had her trying on the dress in a test room. I kept trying to ask her what she thought but... she seemed uninterested in talking with me. She was just the model, this was just her gig, and I was just the boss.

Huh...

I was... the boss...

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My third model was a bit of an experience, because... well I had seen her before.

"Hi, hi, sorry I'm late!" she said, walking into my office in a bit of a hurried mess.

I recognized her. The purple hair. The four legs and four breasts. She was...

"Barbara!?" I exclaimed. "The model from Port Solei?"

"Guilty as charged," she laughed to herself. "I guess Lucien didn't tell you I was coming?"

"Lucien doesn't tell me much of anything," I said, rolling my eyes.

"Yeah, they're like that. Always going for the mysterious vibe. Between you and me, though, I hear when they go home, they lounge in sweatpants and watch reality shows just like anyone else."

I couldn't help but laugh back, covering my left mouth just to keep the volume down. "Imagine what would happen if that went public?"

"I know right!?" Barbara said. "Keep it close to your chest, OK?"

"So, let's check what Lucien has to say about-"

"Oh, just skip the files," Barbara said. "I'm gonna be one of the headlining models and I find it easier to work without the long lines of homework Lucien assigns." She put a hand on the stack of papers in my hand and tossed them aside.

"O... OK, so what are... we gonna do?"

"Make a bomb-ass outfit of course!" she said, her eyes lighting up. "I'm thinking something, city chic. They say my legs are my best asset. Maybe something focusing on some curve defining jeans?"

"Jeans?" my right head questioned as my left reached for the stack of papers that Barbara persuaded me to put down. "But Lucien is all going for this, big fantasy, symbolic, crazy theme and-"

“Lucien is smart,” she said, “but they’re also easily distracted. The only reason this brand keeps operating is because their models have the guts to stand up to them every so often. Trust me. If the only thing they show off are these impractical outfits, no one is going to buy their line. We need something practical for stores to pick up.”

“So...jeans?” I asked.

“Jeans,” Barbara said with a nod.

To be honest, it felt great being able to design an outfit around something a little bit more down to Earth. Barbara was a fantastic model, her legs were perfect. Her body had all the right curves. And to be honest, she was just a humantaur with some extra breasts. Lucien specialized in models that had extreme mutations. Designing an outfit for Barbara felt like I was working in the shop again.

Did I miss the shop? No... no it wasn’t that. The shop had me working long hours with little pay. It was a good place to be when I was just starting my career, but I always wanted to be big in fashion.

I wasn’t missing the shop. I was missing... the personal element. Because for me, fashion was about mutants helping other mutants and, I guess here I often wondered if I was doing that. Heck, I barely even talked with my models.

Not Barbara though. She knew this business inside out, and to be honest it was a little surprising to learn she was younger than me and still going through university! By the end of the day, we had a jean and top combo that looked like nothing else before. We specially faded them from dark colors up at the waist to light colors on the bottom and put in some rips to give them a punk sort of look.

I put the whole thing together for maybe 25 dollars...

Lucien was going to sell them for 250... for sure...

Barbara was happy to work with me and complimented my skill. She even gave me her number if we wanted to “hang out” sometime.

Hang out? Like a friendly hangout? Or like... date? God, would Laura understand?

I was catastrophizing... this had been a long day.

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I was happy when the day was over. So many models and so many designs came across my desk they started to blend together. By the end of the day, I couldn’t tell if models were merged or if I couldn’t tell the difference between two people. I had chugged maybe a gallon of coffee. I was ready to go home.

But before that happened, a knock came at my door. Slowly, a timid mutant walked in. She was a fusion, fused at the waist, one pair of legs, but one torso leading up to a body with long red hair and another leading up to a body with shorter shoulder length black hair and eyes hidden behind glasses.

“Oh! I didn’t know I had more models coming!” I said sifting through my files. “Uh... I think I lost your paperwork. Who are you again?”

“O-oh, I’m Mable...” the black-haired mutant said.

“A-and I’m Wendy...” said the redhead.

"Gah..." I grunted furiously typing on my office computer. "I can't... actually find anything about you... What part of the fashion show are you going to be in?"

"Oh, we aren't-" Mable started. But I was too frazzled to even hear her.

"Can't be the finale, Barbara has that covered. And I thought we had all the filler covered. Are you a reserve model?"

"We didn't-" Wendy tried to interrupt.

"I'm sorry, I just... I don't think I can do this without your paperwork. Can you go back to Lucien and-"

"We don't have paperwork!" Mable blurted out.

"You... what?"

"We don't have paperwork because we aren't models..." said Wendy. "We were hoping you could do a private commission for us. A friend of ours, Taff, said you were the best designer in town. We were recommended to you by name."

"Taff?" I said confused. "HOLY SHIT TAFF!" It was like a rush of information jogging my memory. I hadn't thought of Taff, or J and M in ages. I had been so wrapped up in my career and my own love life I hadn't kept up with my friends in months... god closer to a year now! And yet Taff was still trying to get me work! Geez, I didn't deserve a friend like her.

"I'm so sorry," I said, trying to be on my best behavior now that I knew Wendy and Mable were friends of a friend. "I'd be happy to design something for you. What are you looking for? Sportswear? A nice winter coat?"

"Actually..." Wendy said with a blush to her cheeks. "We were thinking of a wedding dress."

"A... what?"

The merged couple lifted up their hands to show golden bands on their ring fingers before leaning in to give each other a deep kiss.

"O-oh..." I said.

For the first time in a long time, I felt way, way out of my league.

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I was so used to worrying about the world of high designer fashion that I hadn't thought about designing wedding dresses in a long time. Certainly not since getting into a relationship of my own. The most I ever did was take measurements for dresses in the past. I never had to design one from scratch. This is the most important dress someone would ever wear and now it was my responsibility. The stress made my mind race.

Marriage felt like something that was outside the realm of possibility for me. It was only recently that I manage to have any success in romance or my career. They always seemed like something you needed to have your life together for...

Did I finally have my life together?

I spent the rest of my day trying to come up with anything that even remotely looked like it would fit. They had a checklist a mile long detailing what they wanted. Traditional but modern. Inspired by fantasy but reserved and down to earth. Accentuating their body but not showing too much skin. Easy to move in but with flares that highlight their love any time they dance.

It was all a huge contradiction, one I didn't even know where to begin on.

I was throwing out my 10th sketch when... they showed up.

"What are you still doing in the office?" Noelle and Daisy said in a monotone voice, as they walked into my office heading right toward me in a way that I could only describe as "ghost-like."

"Oh hey..." I said. "I just... I'm working on a personal commission, and I can't seem to make headway on it."

"It is 10PM," they said in unison. "The night security guard thought you were a burglar."

"10PM!" I said turning to my computer and bringing up the clock. They weren't wrong. I must have spent all day here agonizing over this dress. "Noooooooo... I was supposed to talk with Laura today."

"Perhaps we can assist. We are your assistants after all..." Noelle and Daisy said staring right into me with their cold, soulless eyes.

"I don't know about that. I mean... it's a wedding dress... what do you know about weddings?"

"Quite a bit..." they said holding up their hands to reveal similar bands, encrusted with diamonds, before giving each other a small kiss.

"W-wait, you two are married?" I said. I couldn't believe my eyes. My creepy assistants were in a relationship?

"Of course," Daisy said.

"Obviously," Noelle said.

"Everyone in the office knows," Daisy said.

"What, how? When? Why didn't I know?" My two heads kept looking at them, back and forth, mouths hanging open as if I had just seen the dead rise before my eyes. In my mind, this was just as impossible.

"You never asked..." Noelle said bluntly.

"What is the problem..." Daisy said craning her neck to look at my sketches.

"Well, it's just, the couple has all of these things they want. Like, it's not just that each wants something different. If it was that simple, I could just do a bisected dress. It's that the things they want make no sense. They keep contradicting themselves. They want everything."

"Of course, they want everything..." Noelle said. "They are getting married."

"This will be the greatest day of their lives..." Daisy said. "They want to remember it."

"But... how do you give a couple everything?" I said, resting my left head on my right head and my right head in my hands.

"You don't..." my assistants said in unison.

"Relationships aren't about giving or getting everything..." said Noelle.

"They are about compromise..." Daisy said.

"Compromise?"

"When you are married, both of you want the world..." Noelle said.

"But you can't give the world..." Daisy said.

"You can only give each other..." they both said. "And you realize, that's even better."

"Hmmm...." I said pondering. I wondered if Laura felt the same way. I wondered if she would be happy about the world I could give to her. Gah. Was I really thinking about marriage? No... no she was just the person I was with so... so it was obvious to think about her when it came to this... right.

"You are daydreaming," the two said again, getting uncomfortably close to my faces.

"GAH! Personal space! Personal space!" I said wheeling my chair back. "I... think I still have a lot to learn about what... marriage means. Maybe... you can help?"

"We would be delighted..." Daisy said.

"We are your assistants..." Noelle said.

"After all,..." they said together.

"Heh, yeah... yeah..."

While I let them pour over my sketchbook, I took out my phone and decided to text Laura.

*Hey... sorry I'm texting. Work ran late.*

I waited for a reply.

*Haha. Work always runs late. I just hope you aren't burning yourself out.*

She didn't seem mad.

*Not burnt out. I just have a lot to think about.*

A couple seconds passed.

*Like what?*

I smiled at my screen with both mouths and took a deep calming breath.

*It's complicated but... hey. Wanna come to a fashion show? It's my first big one!*

More time waiting.

Waiting.

Waiting.

*I'd be delighted!*