

The Swapping Device

A transformation series by JohnManTD

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Chapter 9

The last few days have been... weirdly quiet. After that insane night with Lila – the body swap, the sex, finding out she wasn't Emma, and then doing it again after learning the truth – I half expected reality to keep twisting itself into knots around me. But it didn't. The next day felt almost anticlimactic. I met up with Lila and Emma for coffee, a plan Lila had texted me about while still pretending to be Emma. Seeing them side-by-side was a trip. Lila, back in her own skin, gave me this barely perceptible wink, while Emma, bubbly and bright, seemed completely oblivious, like she hadn't just spent a night mentally MIA while her body was out on loan.

The swap back was quick, discreet. I palmed the device under the table, selected them both, targeted "entire body," and hit the button. Zzzzttt. A faint buzz barely audible over the café chatter. Emma blinked, maybe adjusted her shirt slightly, but otherwise showed no sign anything had happened. Lila just smirked, taking a slow sip of her latte. Later, Emma complained about a vague headache and feeling oddly tired, but she brushed it off. No memory, no suspicion. Just... normal.

And that's the thing, isn't it? The device's clean-up job is flawless. As long as the target isn't aware, as long as they don't remember, did it really happen in a way that matters? I keep turning that thought over in my head. Sleeping with Lila... yeah, technically, I cheated on Emma. My gut twists a little even thinking it. But Emma doesn't know. She can't know, not unless I bring her into this whole mess, and I'm definitely not ready for that. So, if there are no witnesses, no evidence left in reality's code, does the act itself still carry the same weight? It feels slippery, that logic, like I'm trying to find a loophole in my own conscience. But the thrill of what happened, the raw intensity of it, drowns out the guilt faster than I'd like to admit. It was magic, pure and simple. A different set of rules. Maybe my old moral compass just doesn't apply here. The thought is both liberating and deeply unsettling, like stepping onto shifting sand. For now, I'm pushing the guilt down, burying it under the excitement of this new world Lila's pulled me into.

After that coffee, the week crawled by with agonizing normalcy. I went to work at the café, dealt with spilled lattes and passive-aggressive customers. I hung out with Sam, listening to him rave about his glorious F-cups and the perks they brought him (free drinks, guys tripping over themselves, the works). He's still loving them, completely unbothered by the fact that they're permanently attached unless we find a willing swap victim. Classic Sam. I went on a couple more low-key dates with Emma – dinner, a walk on the beach – and she was just... Emma. Sweet, funny, completely unaware that her body had been hijacked or that her boyfriend was juggling reality-bending secrets. Every time I looked at her, a fresh wave of guilt would wash over me, but I'd push it back, focusing on the easy comfort between us, the life I was trying to keep separate from the artifact chaos.

But even in the mundane, the device was always there. A constant presence in my pocket, a heavy weight against my thigh, humming with latent power. Standing in line at the grocery store, I'd find myself eyeing the cashier's sharp jawline, wondering what it would feel like swapped onto my own face. Driving home, stuck in traffic, I'd glance at the guy in the beat-up truck next to me, noticing his muscular arms, and the thought would flicker: Swap. Easy. The temptation was relentless, a low-grade fever simmering beneath the surface. I resisted, though. After the intensity of the past weeks – the gender swaps, the gym fiasco, Lila – I needed a break, a moment to breathe and pretend my life wasn't spiraling into some kind of sci-fi porno. I needed to feel normal, even if normal now felt like wearing an ill-fitting suit. But the quiet only amplified the device's pull, the knowledge of what it could do a constant itch I couldn't scratch. It was like having a superpower I was deliberately choosing not to use, and the restraint was almost physically painful.

Finally, Saturday night rolls around. The night of the artifact club meeting. My stomach's been doing nervous little flips all day. This is it. The step into the wider world Lila promised, the chance to meet others like me, others who understand the weird, intoxicating reality of wielding these impossible objects. I spent the afternoon trying to act normal, playing video games with Sam (who kept adjusting his massive chest under his hoodie, grinning every time I rolled my eyes), grabbing lunch with Emma (pushing down the guilt, focusing on her smile). But my mind was elsewhere, buzzing with anticipation.

I wanted to pre-game with Lila, maybe get the lowdown on who's who and what to expect, but she texted earlier saying she had family stuff and couldn't meet up beforehand. "Just meet me there, you'll be fine. Try not to look like a total newbie ;)" Great. So I'm flying solo into a secret society of reality benders. No pressure.

Evening creeps in, painting the LA sky in shades of orange and purple. I shower, taking longer than usual, letting the hot water drum against my shoulders, trying to wash away the nervous energy. What do you even wear to a secret artifact club meeting? A cape? Normal clothes? I settle on dark jeans, a fitted black t-shirt that shows off the subtle definition I borrowed from Mark (still got that fitness boost, apparently), and my favorite leather jacket. Casual, cool, hopefully projecting an air of confidence I definitely don't feel.

I check myself in the mirror. Hair's decent. Look presentable. Deep breath, James. You've handled gender swaps and mind control rings; you can handle a party. The final piece: the device. I grab it from my nightstand, its surface cool and smooth against my palm. It feels heavier tonight, charged with significance. This isn't just my personal toy anymore; it's my ticket into something bigger. I slip it into my jacket pocket, the weight familiar, grounding. Alright. Time to go.

The address Lila texted me leads to a nice, sprawling house nestled in one of the quieter, older neighborhoods slightly uphill from the main city sprawl. Manicured lawn, big oak tree out front, multi-car garage – it screams old money, or at least successful parents. Definitely not the grungy basement or abandoned warehouse my imagination had conjured up for a secret club meeting spot. This meeting is apparently the biggest one they've had in a while, Lila mentioned casually, like the network's suddenly expanding. More people finding artifacts? The thought sends a ripple of unease through me. More wielders means more variables, more potential chaos.

I park the Mercedes down the street – no need to advertise the ill-gotten gains just yet – and walk up the stone pathway. Music drifts from the open windows, a low thrum of indie rock, mixed with laughter and conversation. It sounds... normal. Like any other house party on a Saturday night. Taking another deep breath, I push open the heavy oak door and step inside.

The interior confirms the vibe. It's spacious, tastefully decorated, and buzzing with people. Maybe thirty, forty heads milling around, clustered in conversation groups, drinks in hand. Some are lounging on plush sofas, others leaning against the walls, a few gathered around a table laden with snacks. It's a mixed crowd, mostly college-aged or maybe late twenties, diverse styles, relaxed energy. No shadowy figures in cloaks, no intense stares. Just... people.

Before I can fully process the scene, a girl detaches herself from a group near the entryway and approaches me, clipboard in hand. She's got bright pink hair cut in a sharp bob, multiple

piercings glittering in her ears and nose, and an oversized band tee that swallows her small frame. Her eyes, lined with thick black eyeliner, scan me with friendly efficiency.

“Hey! Welcome,” she says, her voice surprisingly cheerful. “Haven’t seen you before. Name?”

“Uh, James,” I reply, feeling suddenly awkward, like I’m crashing a party I wasn’t invited to.

Her eyes light up as she scans the list on her clipboard. “James... James... Ah, here you are! Lila’s plus one, right?” She taps the name with her pen, looking up with a wide grin.

“Awesome! Lila’s around here somewhere, probably causing trouble. Go on in, grab a drink, make yourself at home.”

“Thanks,” I manage, relief washing over me. At least I’m expected. She gives me a nod and turns back to greet someone else coming through the door. Okay. Step one, survived. Now what?

I scan the room again, searching for Lila’s familiar dark hair and sharp grin, but she’s nowhere in sight. Sam’s not here either, though I didn’t really expect him to be – artifact club feels a bit too organized for his brand of chaos. So, I’m alone, adrift in a sea of strangers who all share this bizarre secret. My nerves prickle again. Best course of action? Blend in. Act natural. Get a drink.

I make my way toward the kitchen, navigating through clusters of people laughing and gesturing animatedly. As I pass one group, I overhear snippets: “—so then I just froze time right before the bus hit me,” and “—turned into my cat for an hour, ended up stuck under the couch.” My eyes widen slightly. They’re talking about it, just like that, casually dropping reality-bending anecdotes like they’re discussing the weather. This is different.

The kitchen is less crowded, a few people grabbing beers from a massive fridge or loading plates with chips and dip. I head straight for the fridge, pulling out a cold beer, the condensation instantly dampening my palm. As I pop the cap off on the counter edge, a voice pipes up beside me.

“First timer?”

I turn to see a girl leaning against the counter, watching me with bright, curious eyes. She’s maybe my height, with a cascade of sunny blonde hair pulled back in a messy ponytail, framing a face that’s all freckles and smiles. She’s wearing denim shorts and a simple white

tank top that hugs a modest B-cup chest. There's an infectious energy about her, bubbly and open.

"Is it that obvious?" I ask, managing a weak smile.

She laughs, a light, musical sound. "Kind of. You've got that 'deer in headlights trying to act cool' vibe going on. Don't worry, we were all there once." She holds out a hand. "I'm Lee. Nice to meet you."

"James," I reply, shaking her hand. Her grip is firm, friendly. "Lee? Is that short for something?" The name sounds a bit unusual, maybe incomplete.

"Nope, just Lee," she says brightly, grabbing a soda from the fridge. "So, James, Lila vouching for you means you're packing some cool artifact. What's your poison? What magical nonsense did you stumble upon?"

I hesitate for a split second. Lila's warning echoes in my head: Don't show anyone that your artifact works on artifact owners. It might draw unwanted attention. Good advice. Best play it cool, keep the full extent of the Swapper under wraps for now.

"It's, uh, a swapping device," I say, keeping my tone casual. "Lets me trade traits between people. Body parts, voices, that kind of thing."

Lee's eyebrows shoot up. "Whoa, seriously? Like, you could swap my freckles onto someone else?"

"Pretty much," I confirm. I reach into my jacket, my fingers brushing the cool surface of the device. I'm about to offer a demonstration, maybe swap her hair color with someone across the room, just a quick, harmless visual. But Lila's warning holds me back. Better not risk revealing that it works on artifact owners just yet. I pull my hand back empty. "Uhh I can't."

Lee doesn't seem disappointed. "Ohhh right, it won't work on me as an artifact owner. Duh. Still, that's badass! A swapping device. The possibilities..." Her eyes sparkle. "Mine's maybe less versatile, but still fun." She holds up her own artifact – a simple silver locket hanging from a chain around her neck. "Watch this."

She takes a deep breath, closes her eyes for a second, takes off the locket, and then... changes. It's not a shimmer or a flash, more like a subtle morphing, a rearranging of features right before my eyes. Her blonde hair darkens, shifting to a glossy black, cut shorter now, framing a face with distinctly East Asian features – higher cheekbones, almond-shaped eyes

that are now a deep brown. Her skin tone shifts, taking on a warmer, yellower hue. Even her body seems subtly different, maybe a touch more petite. She opens her eyes, and the transformation is complete. She looks entirely different, undeniably Chinese.

Then she speaks, and the change is even more jarring. "Hewo?" she says, and the word comes out thick, the 'l' replaced with an 'r', the vowels clipped. Her American accent is gone, replaced by a heavy, stereotypically Chinese accent that makes her words almost difficult to parse. "It change... evlyting. My wook, my voice... how I sound."

My jaw is practically on the floor. I stare, speechless, as she continues, her accent making the sentences choppy, the grammar slightly off.

"See? This... this is weal me. Ooriginal me," she says, gesturing to herself. Her expression is a strange mix of pride and something sadder, resigned. "But I find rocket..." She touches the locket. "And I can be... diffelent."

She closes her eyes again, putting the locket back on, closing her eyes for a moment to focus, and the transformation reverses. The black hair lightens back to blonde, features soften back to Caucasian, skin pales slightly. When she opens her eyes, she's Lee again, the bubbly blonde with the perfect American accent.

"There," she says, sighing softly. "Much easier, right?"

I'm still reeling. "Whoa. That's... incredible. It changes your race?"

"And ethnicity, yeah," she confirms, tucking the locket back under her tank top. "Complete physical and vocal shift. I found it a couple of years ago. At first, it was just a trip, you know? Being someone else for a bit. But then..." She hesitates, her bright smile faltering for a moment. "Things got kinda tense, you know? With all the anti-Asian stuff flaring up, especially around campus. People yelling shit, giving me dirty looks. It just got... exhausting. Being this..." she gestures to her body "...is simpler. People aren't rude, they don't assume things. It's easier to just blend in."

I don't know what to say. Laughing feels wrong, but being overly serious feels patronizing. The casual way she talks about changing her race to avoid harassment is jarring, a stark reminder that these artifacts aren't just fun and games; they're tools people use to navigate a messy, often hostile world. I also realize that her name probably isn't Lee, it's Li, which makes more sense. "Wow, Li," I say. "I'm sorry you have to deal with that. That sucks."

She shrugs, but her smile returns, a little less bright this time. "It is what it is. The locket helps. Most days, I just stay like this." She gestures to her 'Lee' appearance. "Easier than explaining, you know? Anyway!" Her energy snaps back. "Enough sad stories. Wanna try it? The locket works on anyone wearing it."

My eyes widen. "Seriously? I can just...?"

"Yep! We can't use artifacts on other artifact owners, but we can still use them on ourselves. Go on, just think of a race or ethnicity when you put it on. Any one you want." she urges, unclasping the chain and holding it out to me. She shifts back into her natural asian body.

My hand trembles slightly as I take the locket. It's surprisingly light, cool against my skin. I hesitate for a beat, then fasten the chain around my neck. Okay. Race. What do I pick? My mind flashes through options. Black? Asian? Indian? Then it hits me – Latino. Maybe someone who looks like they just stepped off a telenovela set. I close my eyes, picturing it – darker skin, maybe wavy black hair, sharp features.

A strange tingling washes over me, different from the Swapper's buzz. It's more like my skin is rearranging itself, stretching and settling in new ways. I feel my hair thicken, curl slightly at the temples. My facial structure seems to shift, angles sharpening. I open my eyes and glance down at my hands. My skin is definitely darker, a warm olive tone. I rush to a reflective toaster on the counter, peering at myself.

Holy shit. It worked. The face staring back is mine, but undeniably Latino. Darker eyes, thicker brows, a stronger jawline, wavy black hair replacing my usual brown. I run a hand over my face, feeling the unfamiliar contours. "This is insane," I whisper, my voice sounding subtly different, maybe a touch deeper, huskier.

Li laughs beside me. "Rooks good! Very nice." Her accent is hard to understand.

I grin at my reflection, flexing slightly. Even my body feels subtly different, maybe a bit leaner, more defined under my shirt. It's bizarre but exhilarating. Reluctantly, I unclasp the locket. The tingling returns, and I watch in the toaster's reflection as my skin lightens, hair fades back to brown, features soften. I'm me again. I hand the locket back to Li.

"That's... wow," I say, still processing. "Your artifact is amazing, Li."

"Thanks," she says, slipping it back on and instantly morphing back into her white self.

"Yours sounds way crazier, though. Swapping anything? Wild." She glances past me. "Oh, hey, speaking of crazy, you gotta meet Mike and Noah. Come on."

She grabs my arm, pulling me out of the kitchen and back into the main party area. The energy is still high, music pulsing, conversations buzzing. Li leads me to a cluster of people lounging on beanbag chairs in a corner near a large bay window overlooking the backyard.

“Guys, this is James, Lila’s friend,” Li announces, squeezing onto a beanbag. “James, this is Mike, and that’s Noah.”

Mike looks up from his phone. He’s a lanky guy with glasses perched on his nose and an air of intense concentration, even while relaxing. He gives me a brief nod. “Hey. Heard you got a Swapper.”

Noah unfolds himself from another beanbag. He’s younger, maybe early twenties, with bright, mischievous eyes and floppy brown hair that constantly falls into his face. He’s got a wiry energy, bouncing on the balls of his feet even while sitting. “Dude, sick! What’s the craziest thing you’ve swapped?”

“Uh, haven’t done too much yet,” I lie smoothly, remembering Lila’s warning. “Still figuring it out.”

Mike pushes his glasses up his nose. “Mine’s simpler. Mind reading.” He taps his temple. “Got this little implant behind the ear. Found it embedded in an old radio I bought. Lets me pick up surface thoughts from anyone within about ten feet. Useless against other wielders, though, obviously. Your minds are all static.” He winks. “So your dirty secrets are safe with me, James.”

I chuckle, feeling a wave of relief. “Good to know. Can you, like, turn it off?”

“Yeah, it’s got a threshold,” Mike explains. “Too much noise, like in here, and it’s mostly mush unless I focus hard on one person. It’s better for quiet settings. Great for poker, terrible for concerts.”

Noah jumps in before I can ask more. “Okay, okay, mind reading’s cool, but check this out.” He proudly holds up his artifact – a tarnished silver necklace with a swirling, intricate pendant that seems to pulse faintly with inner light. “Shapeshifting. Anything I want, long as I’m wearing this.”

My eyebrows shoot up. “Anything? Like, animals too?” Lila mentioned this guy.

“Yep! Birds, dogs, cats, you name it. Clothes don’t change, though, which can get awkward,” Noah grins. “But the best part is copying people. Watch.” He focuses his gaze on me, and

his body seems to blur for a second, like heat haze rising off asphalt. Then it solidifies, and I'm staring at... myself. An exact duplicate, same height, same build, same clothes, same slightly nervous expression I probably have right now. He's even got my voice.

"Whoa," Mirror-James says, mimicking my tone perfectly. "Trippy, right?"

I'm speechless. It's flawless. Li and Mike are laughing.

"He does this all the time," Li says. "Freaks people out."

Noah-as-James grins. "But wait, there's more!" He flexes, and suddenly his muscles bulge. The black t-shirt strains across a newly ripped chest and bulging biceps. He's still me, but like a version of me that spends six hours a day at the gym and eats nothing but protein powder. "Instant upgrade," Buff-James chuckles, his voice now deeper, more resonant. "Always wanted to see what you'd look like jacked."

"Okay, that's impressive," I admit, slightly envious.

"Oh, it gets better," Buff-James says, his eyes gleaming with that signature Noah mischief. He quickly unbuckles his jeans, dropping them to his ankles. My eyes widen, along with everyone else's, as he focuses downward. His penis, my penis, seems to stretch, thicken, morphing rapidly into something... else. It swells to an obscene size, thick and veiny, curving slightly upward like a dark, pulsing question mark. It's unmistakably equine. A fucking horse cock. On my body.

"Ta-da!" Noah booms in my voice, gesturing proudly.

A collective groan goes through the group. "Noah, put it away!" Li cries, half-laughing, half-disgusted.

"Classic Noah," Mike mutters, shaking his head but smiling faintly. "Such a freak."

Noah laughs, pulling his pants back up quickly. "What? It's hilarious!" The horse cock vanishes as he concentrates, replaced by my normal anatomy before he's fully zipped. He shifts again, the muscles deflating, and he's back to being regular James. "Alright, alright, one more, then I'll behave."

He closes his eyes for a second, and his form melts again. This time, he reshapes into... Margot Robbie. Blonde hair cascades down his shoulders, blue eyes sparkle, and his body molds into her famous curves. But it's not an exact copy. The breasts are larger, spilling

generously out of his black t-shirt, which now looks like a ridiculously ill-fitting crop top on her. Her ass, straining against his jeans, is fuller, rounder, perfectly heart-shaped.

“See?” Noah says, striking a pose, his voice a perfect imitation of Margot’s sultry tone. “They don’t think this is weird.” He winks, running a hand over his enhanced chest. “Everyone loves a bombshell.”

I can’t help but laugh along with the others. It’s absurd, perverse, but undeniably impressive. He holds the pose for another moment, soaking up the attention, before blurring back into his own form, floppy hair and all, pulling the now-baggy t-shirt down.

“Okay, show’s over,” Noah says, grinning.

The party swirls around me, a kaleidoscope of faces and voices, music weaving through the chatter like a vibrant thread. They’ve welcomed me into their corner, shared their secrets, and now the initial ‘new guy’ awkwardness is starting to fade, replaced by a buzzing curiosity. Noah’s still cracking jokes, occasionally shifting a facial feature just to mess with people, while Li and Mike are locked in a debate about the ethics of mind-reading for finding lost keys. I nurse my beer, leaning back against the wall, just observing, soaking it all in. This is my new world, apparently.

My eyes drift across the room, scanning the mingling groups. I spot Pink-Hair-Clipboard-Girl near the door, efficiently directing a newcomer. I see a guy effortlessly levitating a pretzel inches above his palm while talking to a mesmerized girl. This place is unreal. The casual display of power is jarring, yet everyone treats it like it’s Tuesday.

Then my gaze lands on her. She’s standing near the fireplace, slightly apart from the main clusters, sipping a drink and observing the room with quiet intensity. She’s petite, maybe 5’4”, with soft brown hair falling around her shoulders. Her face is pretty in a gentle, unassuming way – big brown eyes, a small nose. Cute, definitely. She’s wearing a simple, dark floral dress that fits her well, hinting at subtle curves. There’s an air of shyness about her, a reluctance to fully engage with the party’s chaotic energy, that resonates with my own initial feelings. Something about her draws me in. Maybe it’s just that she looks approachable, less intimidating than some of the more flamboyant personalities here. On impulse, I push off the wall and start weaving my way towards her.

She looks up as I approach, her eyes widening slightly, a flicker of surprise crossing her features. She offers a small, hesitant smile.

“Hey,” I say, stopping a comfortable distance away. “I’m James. Are you new here too?” Okay, maybe not the smoothest opener, implying she looks as out of place as I feel, but it’s out there now.

Her smile warms slightly, reaching her eyes. “Hi, James. I’m Annie. And yeah, kind of. I mean, I know Lila, she invited me, but this is my first... big meeting.” Her voice is soft, a little melodic.

“Same here,” I admit, relief washing over me. Finding another newbie feels like finding a fellow traveler in a foreign land. “Lila invited me too. It’s pretty overwhelming, right?”

Annie lets out a little laugh, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. “Totally. Everyone seems so... casual about having superpowers, basically. I saw a guy shapeshift into a perfect copy a girl he was talking to before making out with her, and another girl just casually grow her height to reach the top shelf in the kitchen. It’s wild.”

I chuckle, rubbing the back of my neck. “Yeah, I’m finding it hard to adjust. It wasn’t that long ago I didn’t even know any of this was possible.”

“Tell me about it,” she agrees, her gaze drifting around the room again. “It’s like stepping into a comic book, but everyone’s just mingling and grabbing snacks.”

We fall into easy conversation after that. Turns out Annie’s a freshman at UCLA. We compare notes on local restaurants, the questionable quality the food at this party, and the general chaos of navigating LA. She’s sharp, observant, with a dry wit that emerges when she gets comfortable. We talk about her majors – she’s undecided but leaning towards art or design, which sparks a connection, as it’s something I’ve vaguely considered myself.

“It’s just hard, you know?” she confides, swirling the drink in her cup. “Everyone expects you to have it all figured out, but I feel like I’m just... floating. Trying not to sink.”

“I get that,” I say, nodding. “Completely. Feels like everyone else got the instruction manual for life, and mine got lost in the mail.”

She laughs, a genuine, warm sound this time. “Exactly! It’s nice to know I’m not the only one.”

There’s a comfortable lull in the conversation, and my curiosity about her artifact bubbles up again. I glance around, making sure no one’s overtly listening. “So,” I start, lowering my voice slightly, “What kind of crazy magic thing did you find?”

Annie's cheeks flush faintly, and she looks down at her drink, tracing the rim with her finger. "Oh, um, it's really not that impressive," she murmurs, fidgeting slightly. "Compared to shapeshifting or swapping people's brains around, mine's pretty... niche."

"Come on," I coax gently. "Everything here seems pretty wild. I bet yours is cool." I'm genuinely curious now. Her hesitation makes it seem more intriguing.

She bites her lip, then meets my gaze, her brown eyes uncertain. "It's... well, it's a watch." She lifts her wrist slightly, showing me a delicate silver band with a small, elegant face. It looks perfectly normal, chic even. "It, uh... it changes my breast size."

I blink. "Your... breast size? Seriously?"

She nods, her flush deepening. "Yeah. I can dial it up or down. Change the band size too, apparently. Found it on campus a few weeks ago. It's kind of silly, honestly." She gives a self-deprecating little laugh.

Breast size. My mind flashes back to the swaps I'd done – Cindy's chest, Mom's, the gym girl, Lila's temporary enhancement. This is different. Not swapping, but changing. Growing or shrinking. A watch that controls bust size. It's absurd, almost comical in its specificity, yet undeniably intriguing.

"That's not silly, Annie," I say, leaning in slightly. "That's fascinating. How does it work?"

Before she can answer, a familiar voice cuts in, bright and teasing. "Talking about your magic boob watch, Annie?"

We both turn as Lila materializes beside us, slinging an arm around Annie's shoulders. Annie jumps slightly, then relaxes into Lila's embrace with a familiar smile. Okay, so they are friends. Good friends, judging by the easy way Lila invades her personal space.

"Lila, hey," Annie says, laughing. "I was just telling James."

Lila grins at me, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "Isn't it the best? I told you she had something cool. You haven't shown him yet, have you, Annie?" She gives Annie's shoulder a little squeeze.

Annie shakes her head, looking slightly embarrassed but also amused. "No, I was just explaining."

“Well, explanation time is over. Demonstration time!” Lila declares dramatically. “Come on, show him the goods. Give him the C-cup special, or maybe the D-cup delight?”

Annie rolls her eyes, but there’s a playful glint in them now. “Okay, okay, fine. But don’t make it weird.” She turns back to me, takes a small breath, and then focuses on the watch. I watch, fascinated, as she twists the small dial on its side.

Instantly, I see it. A subtle warmth seems to emanate from her chest, and the fabric of her floral dress tightens. Her breasts swell smoothly, gracefully, expanding outward. It’s not the jarring, instant shift of Noah’s shapeshifting or the quick zap of my Swapper. This is organic, like watching a time-lapse video of puberty hitting fast forward. They grow from what looked like maybe a modest A or small B to a definite C-cup, full and round, pressing against the neckline of her dress, creating noticeable cleavage where there was none before. She stops the dial, her cheeks slightly pink, and offers a shy smile.

“See?” she says softly.

I’m mesmerized. The change is so seamless, so real. There’s no flicker, no distortion, just... growth. My eyes are glued to her chest, tracing the new curves. It’s undeniably hot, watching the transformation happen right there, but it’s also scientifically fascinating from an artifact perspective. This isn’t swapping existing matter; it’s seemingly creating or altering it.

“Wow,” I breathe, finally tearing my gaze away to meet her eyes. “That’s... really cool, Annie. Seriously. The way it just... happens.”

She shrugs, a small smile playing on her lips. “Yeah, it’s neat, I guess.” She twists the dial again, and just as smoothly, her breasts deflate, shrinking back to their original size, the dress loosening around her chest. “But like I said, kinda lame compared to what you guys can do. It’s not exactly saving the world or reading minds. Pretty limited, day-to-day.” She pauses, then adds with a slightly cryptic smirk, almost to herself, “But I’ve... managed to make it work for me.”

I catch the odd inflection, the hint of something hidden behind her words, but before I can puzzle it out, Lila claps her hands together.

“Limited? Girl, please. The applications are endless!” Lila winks at me. “Anyway, James, can I steal you for a sec? Need to discuss club politics.” She throws Annie another quick hug. “Catch you later, Annie! Don’t let the shapeshifters bite.”

Annie laughs. “Will do. Nice meeting you, James.”

“You too, Annie,” I say, offering her a smile before Lila tugs me away towards a less crowded hallway off the main living area.

Once we’re out of earshot, Lila’s playful demeanor evaporates, replaced by a sharp, focused intensity. She stops, turning to face me, her eyes scanning the empty hallway. “Okay, quick check-in,” she says, her voice low. “You’ve been behaving, right? No swapping weirdness? And definitely no demonstrating the, uh, special features of your device?”

I hold up my hands defensively. “Scout’s honor. Kept it vague, just like you said. Told Li and the others it swaps traits, showed them nothing. Nobody knows mine can affect other wielders.”

Lila nods, letting out a breath of relief. “Good. Keep it that way. Seriously, James. What you have... it’s different. People here are used to artifacts having rules, limitations, especially the one about not affecting each other. Yours breaks that rule. If people knew... some might get scared, others jealous. It could make you a target for the wrong reasons, long before Bill’s boogeyman artifact even shows up.”

Her seriousness chills me slightly. “Got it. Secret stays safe.”

“Damn right.” She glances back towards the party noise, then leans in conspiratorially. “Speaking of targets, you ready for the main event? Bill’s about to start his sermon.” She rolls her eyes dramatically. “Try to stay awake.”

I follow her back towards the living room just as the indie rock fades out, replaced by the gentle feedback screech of a microphone. A hush falls over the crowd as people turn their attention towards a small, slightly elevated platform near the fireplace that I hadn’t noticed before. Standing there is a man who looks to be in his mid-to-late forties. He’s unassuming in appearance – thinning brown hair, wire-rimmed glasses, dressed in comfortable slacks and a button-down shirt, slightly rumpled. He doesn’t look like the leader of a secret society; he looks like a suburban dad about to give a toast at a barbecue.

“That’s Bill,” Lila whispers beside me, nudging my arm. “The founder, the glue, the guy with the slightly creepy book.”

Bill taps the microphone, offering a warm, slightly nervous smile to the room. “Evening, everyone. Evening! Glad you could all make it. Looks like we’ve got a great turnout tonight, bigger than ever, which is fantastic to see.” His voice is calm, reassuring, with that slight dad-like quality. “For those of you who are new,” his eyes briefly sweep the room, maybe

catching mine for a fraction of a second, “welcome. My name is Bill, and I, uh, sort of got this whole thing started a few years back.”

He gestures vaguely around the room. “This club, this network, whatever you want to call it, exists for a simple reason: we’re different. We’ve stumbled onto something... extraordinary. These artifacts,” he pauses, letting the word hang in the air, “they change things. They change us. And navigating that alone can be isolating, even dangerous. So, we gather. We share stories, offer support, trade information, and generally try to keep each other from doing anything too monumentally stupid.” A ripple of laughter goes through the crowd.

“My own artifact,” Bill continues, patting a worn, leather-bound book resting on a small lectern beside him, “is this book. It allows me to... influence reality, in a very specific way. If I write a sentence about a particular person – someone without an artifact, I should stress – that sentence becomes true for them. It’s a responsibility I take seriously. And like all artifacts, it has its rules. It doesn’t work on any of you in this room. Our artifacts protect us from the direct influence of others. A fundamental rule. Mostly...”

He clears his throat, and the mood in the room shifts subtly. The relaxed vibe tightens, anticipation crackling in the air. Bill’s expression turns grave.

“Which brings me to a more serious matter,” he says, his voice losing its warmth, taking on a harder edge. “Many of you are aware of the old stories, the legends passed down through artifact circles for generations, maybe centuries. Stories of the origin. Of the First Artifact.”

My blood runs cold. Lila stiffens beside me.

“These legends speak of a time before the rules,” Bill continues, his gaze sweeping the silent room. “A time when the very first artifact was created. Not a ring, not a pendant, not a watch... but a scroll. An ancient, powerful scroll that didn’t just nudge reality, but could rewrite it entirely. It didn’t just influence individuals; it could reshape the fabric of existence itself.”

He pauses, letting the weight of his words sink in. “The power was deemed too great, too uncontrollable. The potential for catastrophe, astronomical. According to the legends, the very beings or forces that introduced artifacts into our world recognized this danger. And so, a fundamental limitation was woven into all subsequent artifacts: they cannot directly affect another artifact wielder. A safeguard. A firewall to prevent one of us from gaining absolute power over the others, from rewriting our realities, our very beings.”

My heart is hammering against my ribs. I glance at Lila. Her face is pale, her eyes wide, fixed on Bill. She knows. We both know. He's talking about my device.

"For a long time," Bill says, his voice low and somber, "we believed the First Artifact, the scroll, was lost to time, perhaps destroyed, its power too volatile to exist. But recent whispers, fragmented reports, anomalies that don't fit the established rules... they suggest something unsettling." He looks directly out at the crowd now, his eyes seeming to pierce through the dim light. "There is growing concern, credible concern, that the First Artifact has resurfaced. Likely reshaped, disguised in a modern form, but possessing its original, terrifying capability: the power to alter reality, **and** the power to affect artifact wielders themselves."

A collective gasp, a murmur of disbelief ripples through the room. People shift uneasily, glancing at their neighbors.

"I know this is alarming," Bill says, holding up a hand to quell the rising anxiety. "Believe me, the implications are... staggering. An artifact that bypasses our inherent protection threatens the secrecy, the safety, the very existence of our community. It could be used to control us, change us, erase us, without us even realizing it until it's too late, if our reality gets warped."

He takes a deep breath. "We don't know its current form. It could be anything – a phone, a tablet, a game controller, hell, even a simple pen. We don't know precisely how it affects wielders, whether it bypasses the memory protection, or if its physical effects are permanent. The legends are unclear on the specifics of its interaction with those already protected. What we do know is that it breaks the cardinal rule. And that makes its current wielder... incredibly dangerous."

His next words land like hammer blows. "Therefore, a consensus has been reached among some of the oldest and most established members of our network. A significant bounty is being offered. For concrete information leading to the identification and securing of this First Artifact, and the individual who currently possesses it."

The air feels thick, suffocating. Bounty. They're hunting for me. For the device in my pocket.

"Be vigilant," Bill warns, his voice resonating with urgency. "Look for anomalies. Changes that don't make sense, even by our standards. Powers manifesting in ways they shouldn't. People suddenly altered, physically or mentally, in ways that defy the rules as we know them. If you encounter something, someone, demonstrating power that seems to rewrite

reality or directly manipulate another wielder... be cautious. Report it. The artifact must be contained."

He finishes speaking, the silence stretching, heavy and oppressive. Then, slowly, the background music fades back in, tentative at first, trying to fill the void. Conversations start up again, but they're hushed now, laced with suspicion. People are looking at each other differently, a new layer of paranoia coating the room.

I grab Lila's arm, my hand shaking slightly. "We need to talk. Now."

She nods grimly, her face tight with worry, and steers me back towards the empty hallway we were in before. As soon as we're out of sight, I whirl on her, my voice a panicked whisper.

"Lila, what the fuck?! A bounty? They're hunting for me!"

"I know, James, I know," she says, running a hand through her hair, her usual cool facade cracking. "Shit. This is... this is way worse than I thought. I've heard whispers about the First Artifact, but always treated it like a myth, a boogeyman story. But if your artifact fits the legend... Fuck, James." She paces the narrow hallway, chewing on her lip. "A reality warper that ignores the main rule? No wonder they're scared. That kind of power..."

"They want to 'secure' it? What does that mean? Take it from me? Lock me up?" The panic bubbles higher.

"I don't know," Lila admits, stopping to face me, her eyes dark with concern. "Could mean anything. Neutralize the threat, maybe study the device. But 'bounty' doesn't sound good. Someone desperate or ruthless might come after you, James. Someone who wants the reward, or maybe even the device itself."

The implications slam into me. Every person at that party is now a potential threat. Every friendly smile could hide suspicion, every question could be an interrogation. My secret isn't just about kinks and fun anymore; it's about survival.

"Okay," I say, forcing myself to breathe, to think. "Okay. Nobody knows it's me. Nobody saw me demonstrate it on anyone here."

"Right," Lila confirms. "You played it smart. Li, Mike, Noah, Annie... they just think you have a cool swapping gadget. They don't know its true potential, the rule it breaks."

"So we keep it that way," I say firmly, meeting her gaze. "Absolute secrecy. Nobody else finds out. Not Sam, not Emma, definitely no one from the club."

Lila nods, her expression resolute. “Agreed. This stays between us. We need to figure out what’s going on, who put up this bounty, how much danger you’re really in. But we do it quietly.”

“How?”

“I don’t know, I need time to think about it. In the meantime, be careful who you use it on, and never let anyone see it affect another wielder. Act normal.”

“Normal,” I repeat, the word tasting like ash. “Right.”

We stand there for another moment, the unspoken danger hanging heavy between us. The party sounds distant now, muffled. This secret, our secret, just became a thousand times heavier.

“We should probably get back out there,” Lila says eventually, forcing a strained smile. “Acting weird will only draw attention.”

I nod, squaring my shoulders, trying to project a calm I don’t feel. “Yeah. Okay. Let’s go.”

Stepping back into the main room feels like diving back into a slightly distorted reality. The music’s still playing, people are still laughing, drinks are still flowing, but the undercurrent has shifted. Or maybe it’s just me. Every friendly glance now feels like scrutiny, every casual question a potential probe. The knowledge of the bounty hangs heavy in the air, a storm cloud only Lila and I can see.

Lila drifts beside me, grabbing two more beers from a cooler near the back door. She hands one to me, her fingers brushing mine, and the contact sends a jolt through me – not just attraction, but the electric charge of a shared, dangerous secret. “Act normal,” she murmurs, her voice barely audible over the music, her eyes scanning the room. “Just blend.”

Easier said than done. I take a long pull from the bottle, the cold beer doing little to calm the frantic hummingbird beating against my ribs. We rejoin a small group near the fireplace – Noah’s telling an animated story involving shifting into a squirrel to steal exam answers, Mike’s looking skeptical, and Li is giggling. I try to engage, nodding along, forcing a laugh, but my focus keeps splintering. I’m tracking movement, watching faces, trying to gauge who looks too interested, who seems too intense. It’s exhausting.

We mingle for another hour or so. I chat with a guy who claims his artifact is a pair of dice that dictate minor luck – roll snake eyes, you stub your toe; roll double sixes, you find a

prime parking spot. Sounds harmless enough. I talk to a woman with glasses that supposedly let her see through whatever she wants. Walls, bodies, even clothes. I left after she creepily told me I had a nice penis. Compared to the First Artifact... my artifact... these feel like party tricks. Lila works the room with practiced ease, laughing, flirting, gathering whispers of conversation, occasionally catching my eye with a look that says, Nothing yet, stay cool.

The booze helps numb the paranoia slightly, loosening my shoulders, letting me sink a little more into the party's rhythm. It's in this tipsy relaxation state that Bill finds me.

He appears suddenly at my elbow, materializing out of the crowd with that same unassuming, dad-like presence. He's holding a glass of what looks like water, his wire-rimmed glasses perched on his nose. "James, is it?" he asks, extending a hand. His smile is friendly, but his eyes behind the lenses are sharp, analytical.

"Yeah, that's me," I reply, shaking his hand. His grip is firm, dry. "Bill, right? You gave the welcome speech."

"Indeed," he says, his gaze lingering on me for a beat too long. "Lila mentioned she was bringing a new face tonight. Glad you could make it. It's always encouraging to see our little community grow." He takes a sip of his water. "First impressions? Not too overwhelming, I hope?"

"It's... a lot to take in," I admit, opting for honesty, or a version of it. "Everyone's abilities... it's pretty wild."

"It is," he agrees readily. "We live in extraordinary times, James. Possessing an artifact... it sets us apart. A gift, I believe. Or perhaps a test." He studies me again, a faint smile playing on his lips. "Lila mentioned you have a swapping artifact?"

My internal alarms blare. Keep it vague. Keep it safe. "Yeah, something like that," I say casually, shrugging. "Lets me trade traits between people. Voices, hair color, minor stuff mostly. Still figuring out its quirks."

Bill's eyebrows raise slightly. "Fascinating. Swapping. A potent concept. Does it allow for more significant alterations? Physical forms? Abstract qualities?" His questions are precise, probing.

"Sometimes," I say, deliberately evasive. "Like I said, still experimenting. It seems pretty limited, though."

"I see." He takes another sip of water, his eyes never leaving mine. "Would you mind demonstrating? On something simple, perhaps? Always illuminating to see another artifact in action."

My throat tightens. This is the moment Lila warned me about. "Ah, I would," I say, forcing a regretful tone, "but it's got one major limitation I've discovered – it doesn't seem to work on other artifact wielders at all. Like your book. Something about our innate protection just nullifies it completely. Tried it earlier on someone, nothing happened." The lie feels smooth, plausible, banking on the very rule my device breaks.

Bill goes very still for a moment. His friendly mask doesn't slip, but the analytical sharpness in his eyes intensifies. He seems to be dissecting my words, weighing them. Did he buy it? Or does he sense the deception? The silence stretches, thick with unspoken questions.

Then, slowly, he nods. "Interesting. Yes, the inherent protection is a curious thing, isn't it? Varying levels, perhaps, depending on the artifact. A shame yours has such a restriction, but understandable." He offers that faint smile again, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes this time. "Well, regardless, James, we're happy to have you. New blood, new perspectives, it's vital."

He lowers his voice slightly. "And vital that you understand the... responsibility that comes with these gifts. Especially now." He glances around the room, a flicker of gravity crossing his features. "This First Artifact... the potential for misuse is immense. An artifact that can affect us? It could unravel everything we've built, expose us all. We must be vigilant. Trust is paramount in this circle, but caution is necessary."

He leans a fraction closer. "I believe we are chosen, James. Selected by forces we don't understand – gods, fate, cosmic chance, call it what you will. Chosen to wield power, to navigate its complexities. It binds us together." His tone is fervent now, bordering on zealous. There's a gleam in his eye that makes my skin crawl. Gods? Chosen? Okay, officially creepy.

"Right," I say, nodding slowly, trying to look thoughtful rather than freaked out.

"Responsibility. Got it."

"Good," Bill says, clapping me lightly on the shoulder, the friendly dad persona snapping back into place. "Enjoy the rest of the party. Don't be a stranger. And if you see anything... unusual... you know who to talk to." With a final nod, he melts back into the crowd, leaving me feeling like I've just narrowly avoided stepping on a landmine.

I immediately seek out Lila, finding her near the snack table, pretending to inspect a bowl of pretzels. I pull her aside again, back into the relative privacy of the hallway.

“Bill just talked to me,” I whisper, my voice tight.

Lila’s instantly alert. “And?”

“He asked about the device. Asked for a demo.” I quickly recount the conversation, the lie I told about it not working on wielders. “He seemed to buy it... maybe. But Lila, the way he looked at me when I said it... like he was trying to see right through me. And then he went on this weird tangent about being ‘chosen by the gods’. The guy’s intense.”

Lila chews her lip, frowning. “Damn. Bill’s sharp. He runs this whole network, knows more about artifacts than probably anyone. If he’s suspicious... that’s not good. The ‘chosen by the gods’ thing is his standard spiel, he genuinely believes it, thinks he’s guiding us or something. Makes him feel important. But it also means he takes threats to his ‘flock’ very seriously.”

“So you think he could be dangerous?”

“Potentially,” she admits grimly. “If he truly believes your device is the First Artifact, and that you’re lying about its limitations... he might see you as a threat that needs managing. Or eliminating. We need to be incredibly careful around him, James. Don’t give him any reason to doubt your story.”

The weight of the situation presses down on me again. Bounty hunters, a suspicious leader, a world-altering secret in my pocket. What the hell have I gotten myself into?

We head back to the party, plastering smiles on our faces, determined to act normal. We grab more drinks, mingle with different groups. I end up talking to Annie again for a bit, learning more about her art aspirations. Lila joins us, and the three of us chat easily, a little bubble of relative normalcy in the midst of the weirdness.

As the night wears on, the crowd thins out. The music gets softer, the lights dimmer. Lila and I have had a few more drinks, the alcohol finally managing to dull the sharp edges of my anxiety, replacing it with a warm, reckless buzz. We find ourselves leaning against a wall near the back patio, the cool night air drifting in.

Lila turns to me, her eyes dark and luminous in the low light. There’s a charge between us, amplified by the shared secret, the danger, the booze. “So,” she says, her voice a low murmur, “survived your first club meeting.”

“Barely,” I reply, a wry smile touching my lips. “Definitely more intense than expected.”

“It’s always an adventure.” She steps a fraction closer, her shoulder brushing mine. “Kind of hot, though, isn’t it? The risk? The secrets?”

I meet her gaze, and the air crackles. The memory of our night together, her in Emma’s body, the raw intensity of it, floods back. The guilt is still there, a faint whisper, but it’s drowned out by the proximity, the alcohol, the undeniable pull towards her.

“Yeah,” I admit, my voice husky. “It is.”

Her lips curve into a slow, knowing smile. “This house is huge. Lots of empty rooms upstairs...” The invitation hangs there, blatant and tempting.

My mind races. Emma. Don’t. This is wrong. But another voice, louder now, slicker, whispers back, She’ll never know. Reality bends. The rules are different here. Lila gets it. She’s part of this world. This is okay. This is part of the game. The justification feels flimsy, transparent, but I cling to it. The thrill is too strong, the temptation too sweet.

“Lead the way,” I say, my heart pounding a heavy rhythm against my ribs.

Lila’s grin widens, triumphant. She takes my hand, her fingers lacing through mine, and pulls me through a doorway, up a dimly lit staircase, away from the fading party noise. We find an empty guest room, plush carpet silencing our steps, a large bed dominating the space, shadows pooling in the corners. The door clicks shut behind us, sealing us in our own private bubble.

The moment we’re alone, the pretense drops. Lila turns to me, her eyes blazing, and pushes me back against the door, her mouth crashing onto mine. It’s a hungry kiss, desperate and demanding, fueled by everything unspoken – the danger, the secrets, the forbidden thrill. I kiss her back just as fiercely, hands tangling in her dark hair, pulling her closer.

Clothes melt away in a tangle of limbs and urgency. Her skin is warm beneath my hands, smooth and inviting. We stumble towards the bed, shedding layers until we’re both naked, bathed in the soft moonlight filtering through the window.

Lila pushes me down onto the mattress, straddling my hips, her eyes locked on mine. “Okay, Swapper,” she breathes, her voice husky with desire. “Show me what that device can really do.”

A wicked grin spreads across my face. The request, the trust, the sheer audacity of it sends a fresh wave of heat through me. I reach for my jacket draped over a nearby chair, retrieving the device.

The challenge hangs in the air, and the alcohol, the adrenaline, the sheer power humming in my hand pushes me. No holding back. Okay. I take a deep breath, select "Entire Body," target us both, and press the button again.

Zzzztttt.

The sensation is instantaneous. I feel the weight of her C-cup breasts settling against my ribs, the curve of her hips beneath my hands, the absence between my legs replaced by her warmth, her wetness. I flex my fingers, long and slender, nails painted a dark crimson. I run a hand down my flat stomach, over the gentle flare of my hip. It's incredible. Familiar from my previous gender swaps, but different knowing this isn't just a female form, it's Lila's.

Across from me, Lila is experiencing the reverse. She sits up fully in my body, looking down with wide eyes. She flexes my - now her - biceps, runs a hand over her abs. Then, her hand drifts lower, closing around her cock, which is already stirring, responding to her touch, her mind.

"Holy shit," she breathes, her voice now my deeper baritone. "This is... power. Feeling this... thing." She gives my cock a tentative stroke, and a jolt shoots through me, even though I'm in her body. The connection is still there, a phantom limb responding.

"It's intense, right?" I say, my voice Lila's melodic alto. It feels strange hearing it come from my own mouth. I stand up, testing her legs, feeling the different balance, the sway of her hips. I walk to a floor-length mirror against the far wall, turning slowly, examining myself. Lila's body is lean, athletic but feminine. Great legs, a tight ass, those nice C-cups not quite as big as Cindy's but still nice. Seeing it as mine is a whole new level of weird and wonderful.

Lila-in-my-body joins me at the mirror, standing beside me. Our reflections stare back – me in her body, her in mine. It's surreal. She wraps an arm around my waist, pulling me close. Her hand cups my breast.

"This is new," she whispers, her breath warm against my ear. "Swapping bodies entirely... never done this."

“Me neither,” I admit, turning to face her, my heart pounding. The sight of my own body, animated by her consciousness, looking at me with desire, is intensely erotic. “Ready to see what it feels like?”

Her eyes darken with lust. “Fuck yes.”

She pushes me back onto the bed, her movements now confident, possessive, exploring the power in my male form. She climbs over me, her weight solid and muscular, pinning me down easily. Her hands roam over my new female body, learning its contours, squeezing my breasts, eliciting gasps that feel foreign yet intimate coming from my lips.

“You feel incredible,” she growls in my voice, leaning down to kiss me. Her kiss is rougher now, imbued with male strength, and I melt into it, arching up to meet her.

Then she positions herself, guiding my cock – her cock now – towards my entrance. I take a sharp breath as she pushes inside me. The sensation is overwhelming. Being penetrated. It’s tight, stretching, a friction that’s both intensely pleasurable and fundamentally alien. I moan, digging my nails into my back.

She starts to move, thrusting into me with my own body’s strength and rhythm. It’s the most disorienting, profoundly erotic experience of my life. I’m fucking myself, essentially, but experiencing it from the other side. Lila’s moans are deep, guttural, coming from my throat, while mine are higher, breathless, spilling from hers.

She flips me onto my stomach, pulling me into a doggy style position. My new breasts hang heavy, swaying with the movement. She enters me again from behind, her thrusts deep and powerful. I brace myself on my hands, looking back over my shoulder, watching my own body pound into me. The sight is mesmerizing, hypnotic. It’s raw, primal, and confusingly hot.

“How’s that feel, James?” she pants in my voice, slapping my ass lightly.

“Fucking... weird,” I gasp out, the sensations blurring. “But good. So good.” And it is. There’s a vulnerability in receiving, a surrender that’s surprisingly potent. The impact, the fullness, the rhythmic pressure... it’s igniting something deep inside me. A flicker of realization sparks: maybe I like this. Maybe I like being the one receiving, the one being filled. The thought is fleeting, almost shocking, but it resonates with the pleasure currently overwhelming my senses. The feeling of being taken, dominated, even by my own body piloted by someone else... it’s unlocking a part of my desires I hadn’t fully acknowledged.

Lila senses the shift, her thrusts becoming more targeted, teasing. She reaches around, her long fingers finding my clit, rubbing circles as she pounds into me. The dual stimulation is electrifying. I cry out, my body convulsing, pleasure spiking higher and higher.

“You like that, huh?” she murmurs, her voice rough with exertion. “Like being filled up, made to come?”

“Yes,” I sob, coherence shattering. “Fuck, yes.”

She rides me harder, faster, pushing us both towards the edge. I feel her climax building within my old body, the familiar tension coiling, while simultaneously feeling the waves of my own impending orgasm crashing through Lila’s nerves. We come together, a tangled mess of swapped bodies and shared release, cries echoing in the quiet room. Her release inside me is a hot flood, while my orgasm rips through Lila’s body, intense and shattering.

We collapse, limbs intertwined, sweat-slicked skin sticking together. My mind is reeling, trying to process the sensory overload, the profound weirdness and undeniable pleasure of what just happened. Lying there, in Lila’s skin, feeling the phantom throb where my own cock used to be and the lingering fullness inside this pussy, I can’t deny it any longer. As fucked up as it sounds, part of me, maybe a growing part, preferred that. Preferred being the girl. The thought settles, heavy and real, as the adrenaline fades, leaving me breathless in the moonlit room.

The tangled sheets feel impossibly soft against Lila’s skin – my skin, for now. The air in the room is thick, hazy with the aftermath of sex, and my mind is still trying to reconcile the whirlwind of sensations. Being Lila, feeling her body respond, feeling my body respond under her control... it was a head trip of epic proportions. That strange, almost reluctant preference I felt simmering inside me earlier? It’s solidified now, a quiet certainty settling in my gut. As insane as it sounds, receiving felt... better. More intense, more consuming.

“How you feeling over there, swapped and screwed?” She asks.

“Overwhelmed,” I admit, my voice Lila’s melodic alto. I push myself up, feeling the weight of my breasts shift.

“But awesome.” She says, and swings her legs over the side of the bed, standing up and stretching in my body. “Okay, we should probably put clothes back on before someone barges in.”

Clothes. Right. Her clothes. I grab her tank top first, pulling it over my head. The soft fabric slides down her torso, hugging curves I'm not used to. Then the jeans. They're snug, designed for her leaner hips and legs, and I have to wiggle a bit to get them zipped, the button digging slightly into my softer stomach. It feels constricting, foreign. Lastly, the bra. I fumble with the clasp behind my back, my fingers clumsy in this new configuration, eventually managing to hook it. Her breasts settle into the cups, a contained weight now.

Across the room, Lila's having an easier time with my clothes. My jeans hang a little looser on her narrower hips, my black t-shirt fitting comfortably over my flat chest. She pulls on my leather jacket, shrugging my broader shoulders into it. She looks... cool. Annoyingly cool, actually, wearing my clothes better than I probably do.

She catches me watching and laughs, the sound deep and resonant – my laugh. “What? Jealous I make your style look good?”

“Something like that,” I mutter, running a hand through her dark hair – my hair now. It feels silky, different. “It's just... weird seeing you... being me.”

“Tell me about it.” She strikes a pose, mimicking my typical slouch, hands shoved in my jacket pockets. “Look at me, I'm James, I've got a magic artifact and a brooding expression.” Then she drops the pose and observes me critically. “You, on the other hand... wow. Seeing my body move like a dude is hilarious. Stop sitting like that.”

I realize I'm manspreading slightly on the edge of the bed, a habit I hadn't even noticed. I quickly cross Lila's legs, feeling heat creep up my neck. “Sorry. Force of habit.”

“It's funny,” she says, shaking her head. “You move like you're still expecting balls to be there.”

Before I can retort, the doorknob turns. We both freeze, eyes wide with panic, as the door swings inward. Bill stands there, looking mildly surprised to see us. His gaze sweeps over the room – the rumpled bed, us hastily dressed – and settles on Lila-in-my-body.

“Oh, sorry,” he says, his tone polite but holding an edge of authority. “Didn't realize my room was occupied. Party's winding down downstairs. Thought I'd turn in.”

His room? Shit. We picked the founder's bedroom to hook up in. Smooth, James. Real smooth.

Panic claws at my throat. We're in each other's bodies. If Bill realizes... if he sees anything off... he'll know. He'll know my device can affect wielders. The bounty, the suspicion – it'll all come crashing down. Lila catches my eye, her expression mirroring my own terror, but she recovers faster.

"Oh, Bill, hey!" she says, her voice my deep baritone, projecting forced casualness. "Sorry, man. James and I were just... looking for a quiet place to talk. Didn't realize this was your room. We were just heading out anyway." She gestures towards me, standing awkwardly by the bed in Lila's clothes.

Bill's gaze flicks to me, lingering for a moment. Does he notice something? The ill-fitting clothes? The way I'm standing too stiffly? My heart pounds like a drum against Lila's ribs.

"No problem at all," Bill says smoothly, his eyes unreadable. "Just locking up soon. Don't want anyone wandering off where they shouldn't." He gives us another tight-lipped smile. "Have a good night, James. Lila." He nods curtly and backs out, pulling the door almost closed behind him.

The second he's gone, Lila lets out a shaky breath, grabbing my arm. "Holy fuck," she whispers, her voice my own low rumble. "That was too close. He totally knows we fucked in his bed."

"Forget the bed, Lila, we're body-swapped!" I hiss back in her voice, my hands shaking. "If he suspected anything..."

"He didn't," she insists, though her eyes are still wide. "We played it cool. He just thinks we were hooking up. But we need to get out of here, now. Before he comes back or someone else sees us like this."

"How? We can't swap back here!"

"We don't," she says, her tone urgent. "We walk out like this. We pretend. You're Lila, I'm James. We just need to get to your car."

Pretend? Walk through the rest of the party, talk to people, as each other? The idea is terrifying. My performance as Lila needs to be convincing, and frankly, I suck at acting.

"Okay," I whisper, steeling myself. "Okay. Play it cool. Say bye and bolt."

Lila nods, taking a deep breath in my chest. “Right. Let’s go. And James?” She looks me up and down, a flicker of amusement in her eyes despite the panic. “Try to walk like a girl, okay? Less stomping.”

I scowl, but she’s right. I focus, trying to channel Lila’s usual confident stride as we step out into the hallway. It feels ridiculous, forcing my hips to sway slightly, taking smaller steps in her jeans. My breasts shift with the movement, a constant, distracting reminder of the charade.

Downstairs, the party has indeed thinned. Maybe fifteen people remain, scattered around the living room, conversations low and intimate. The music is quieter now. We need to find our jackets – my leather one that Lila’s wearing, and her denim one I’d seen draped over a chair earlier.

“There,” Lila-in-my-body murmurs, nodding towards the chair. I walk over – trying to make it a glide, not a stomp – and retrieve her jacket. Slipping it on over her tank top feels... okay. It fits her frame, my current frame, perfectly. Lila shrugs deeper into my leather jacket, looking ruggedly handsome in a way that’s deeply unsettling.

Time for the awkward part. We need to say goodbye. We approach the main group, where Noah, Li, and Mike are still chatting near the fireplace.

“Hey guys, we’re heading out,” Lila announces in my voice, sounding convincingly like me trying to sound casual.

Noah looks up, grinning. “Leaving already, James? Party’s just getting good!” He looks over at me with a smirk that creeps me out. “Don’t let him drag you away too soon, Lila. Stick around.”

Heat floods my face. I force a light laugh, trying to mimic Lila’s playful tone. “Nah, gotta run. Early start tomorrow.” I try to give Noah a flirty little shoulder nudge like Lila might, but it comes off as an awkward bump. God, I’m terrible at this.

Li beams at us. “Okay! Nice meeting you, James!”

Mike just gives a curt nod. “Drive safe.”

We murmur our goodbyes, trying to extract ourselves quickly.

We finally make it outside, bursting through the front door into the cool, blessedly empty night air. We practically sprint down the sidewalk, not stopping until we reach the Mercedes parked under a flickering streetlight half a block away.

“Get in, get in!” Lila urges in my voice, fumbling with my keys. We tumble into the car, slamming the doors shut, the sudden enclosure feeling like a sanctuary. For a moment, we just sit there, breathing heavily, the adrenaline pounding in our ears.

“Okay,” I gasp, my voice Lila’s alto. “Swap us back. Now.”

Lila nods, already holding the device she must have slipped from my jacket pocket during our escape. She aims it between us. Zzzztttt.

The world rights itself with a dizzying lurch. I feel the familiar solidity return to my frame, the comforting weight between my legs, the absence of breasts. I’m me again. I look over at Lila, who slumps back in the passenger seat, running a hand through her own dark hair, letting out a long sigh.

“Jesus Christ,” she breathes, her voice hers again. “That was the most stressful five minutes of my life.”

“Tell me about it,” I agree, feeling the residual tension drain out of me, leaving me shaky but immensely relieved. “Pretending to be you? Terrifying. I think I almost tripped three times trying to walk in your jeans.”

She laughs, a real, genuine sound this time. “You did look pretty ridiculous trying to sashay. And feeling you try to act cool in my body? Hilarious and disturbing.”

We sit in silence for another moment, the shared ordeal creating a strange intimacy.

“Thanks for getting us out of there,” I say eventually. “And for... you know.”

“Hey,” she says, turning to me, her expression soft in the dim light. “Tonight was... intense. In a lot of ways. But we handled it.” She pauses. “I meant what I said, though. We stick together on this artifact thing. Keep the secrets safe.”

“Deal,” I say firmly. “Between us.”

I start the engine, the Mercedes humming to life. “Need a ride home?”

Lila yawns, stretching in the passenger seat. “Yeah, that’d be great. Thanks.” Then she glances at me sharply. “Wait. We both drank a fair bit tonight. Are you good to drive?”

Shit. She’s right. The adrenaline had masked it, but the buzz is definitely still there. I feel warm, fuzzy, my reaction time probably shot. “Uh…”

“James,” she says sternly. “Don’t be an idiot.”

I sigh. She’s right. But calling an Uber feels like admitting defeat after everything. My eyes scan the quiet street. Across the way, a lone figure is shuffling along the sidewalk – looks like some college kid on a night walk. An idea sparks, reckless and immediate. The device is still in my hand.

“Don’t worry,” I say, a grin spreading across my face. “Got it covered.”

Before Lila can ask, I focus on the kid across the street, select “level of intoxication” for both him and me, and hit the button.

Zzzztttt.

The effect is instantaneous. The warm fuzziness evaporates. My head clears, alertness snapping back into place like a light switch flicking on. I feel completely, utterly sober. Across the street, the kid suddenly lurches violently, stumbling sideways and nearly falling into a hedge. He clutches his head, groaning.

I chuckle, feeling a surge of illicit power. Problem solved.

Lila stares at me, her mouth slightly open, then bursts out laughing, shaking her head in disbelief. “Oh my God, James! You did not just swap your drunkenness onto that poor random dude!”

“He looked like he was heading home anyway,” I say, shrugging, though my heart is beating a little faster. It was so easy. Too easy. “Consider it… spreading the party vibe.”

“You are becoming a menace with that thing!” she says, still laughing but with an edge of something else in her voice – amusement, maybe, but also a hint of caution. “You’re getting way too comfortable playing God, you know that?”

I just grin, putting the car in gear. “Someone’s gotta do it.” I pull away from the curb, leaving the stumbling student and Bill’s house behind us. The night feels charged, different. The artifact club, the bounty, the body-swapping sex, the casual manipulation of a stranger – it’s

a potent cocktail, and I'm drinking it down fast. Lila's right, maybe I am getting too comfortable. But as the city lights streak past, the device warm in my pocket, a bigger part of me doesn't care. This power is addictive, and I'm nowhere near ready to quit. The game is just beginning.

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