

## Chapter Three

You remember that day now, your first day in makeup, as you



sit at your dressing table in your bra and panties, hair up, applying your foundation, Radiance by Clinique. It's from their boys' line, and promises it is especially formulated for a boy's sensitive skin.

Your whole future, the future of humanity, it had all been right there in that moment when

you'd had your face made up for the first time. Amber, who'd always had a thing for dudes, rugged manly men, suddenly getting off on the idea of feminizing a man, making him pretty. And you, powerless against the new urge, this drive to wear makeup, letting the girl who'd you'd wanted to fuck make you pretty, even as each wave of her mascara brush felt like a knife to your balls.

The new dynamic between the sexes had started right then and there— Amber had loved feminizing you and she was already starting to find herself turned on by the thought of a pretty, submissive male.

You sat there passively, your hands in your lap, while she did her best to soften your face, erase everything masculine, give you bigger eyes, less angles. You'd wanted it. Needed it. Hated it.

Back in the present, you check your face. Bright. Pretty. Appealing. Appalling. It's that glitch again, that something that was either right or wrong with you that makes you both love and hate your new life.

Radiance is your go-to everyday foundation, but you must have, you don't even know, twenty different jars and tubes of the stuff, different foundations for day, evening, weddings, the beach. You love makeup, and you buy more all the time, and you hate it, too. You hate that you love it and need it and have no choice but

to wear it while women strut around without it whenever it suits them. It wasn't fair, The Hive had decreed, that boys didn't get to wear makeup, and now you had no choice. How was it fair, though, that while you and every boy obsessed over it, women didn't bother most of the time?

How was it fair that workplaces now required boys to wear makeup, but not women?

Total Equality was total bullshit. Women could go where they wanted, when they wanted, looking how they wanted.

Not a boy, though, you think, as you paint your lips a pretty pink, making your already bee stung lips look even bigger, plumper, more inviting and more kissable. If you were to leave the house without doing your face, someone might report you, or one of The Hive might see you, and you could be dragged off for counseling.

It doesn't matter, you tell yourself. You would probably wear it anyway. Boys could be so judgy, and walking around without makeup would set all the bitchy little boys to gossiping. Besides, you have an audition today, and they might not even let you read a single line if you walk in there plain faced like some woman. You want the part, and you need to make yourself pretty.

Pretty? Not pretty. More pretty, you remind yourself as you dust blush onto your cheeks with a camel hairbrush. Even without

makeup, with your face you could have been a model before The Hive – a female model.

You remind yourself of Meika Woollard now, the way she looked before. You'd had a thing for her back in the day, but you'd never wanted to look like her, never thought you would look like her, never thought you'd look up pictures of her before The Hive not so you could drool over her. No. You look at those old pics now so you can copy her makeup, her hairstyles.

You spend half your life watching hair and makeup tutorials on YouTube, all of them made by giggling boys, gushing over the latest colors, the latest trends. There's almost nothing worse for a boy than being out of style. Even the prettiest boy couldn't get away with looking like last year's cover boy. In that sense, being a shame has an advantage. You have to wear a pretty boy dress. Only boys who are engaged or married can choose their own outfits. That saves you a lot of time and even money, though you still find yourself skimming through Mademoiselle, Elle, Cosmopolitan, online shopping, pinning outfit ideas to your Pinterest. You don't even know why, other than The Hive made you this way, obsessed with fashion.

Eyeliner, eyeshadow, mascara done, you pencil in your slender brows, then gasp as you check the time, hopping up, slipping into your dress. It still surprises you how long it takes you to get ready,

and you can only hope the trains are on time! Late to an audition, and you have no chance. You want the part. You want it bad. It's not a great part, but it's as good a part as a boy can get these days. You're sick of being a waitress.

The subway is just pulling in as you're coming down the steps, and you lift your dress and hurry as well as you can in your heels, clicking and clacking, breasts bouncing. The train doors open, and people pour out, and you're small and they bump into you, push you aside, and your heart races because the bell is tolling, the doors will close soon, you'll miss your train... Oh! You hate being so small, so hobbled.

Breasts heaving, you step into the car just as the doors whoosh shut behind you. You look around and all the seats are taken. Great. You're about to grab onto the pole and hold on for dear life when a handsome, older woman smiles and stands. "Please, take my seat."

You smile back and take the offered seat, smoothing your dress under you as you sit. It is—okay— to be a boy sometimes. The man in you, whatever's left of him, would have liked to refuse. You still don't like being treated like a woman, but the train lurches and jerks, and it's hard to keep your balance in heels. Plus, sitting, you can prepare for your audition. Balancing your

purse on your thighs, you pull out the folded-up sides and go over your lines:

**The Dark Moon. Female Lead. Cynthia.**

**Cynthia: Screams. Help! Someone help me!**

**Cynthia glances over his shoulder, terrified. He can hear the thudding footsteps of Jason approaching.**

**Cynthia sinks to her knees, crying. “God, if you can hear me, please send someone to rescue me! Please!”**

**Jason enters. “Not even God can help you now.” Chainsaw roars.**

**Cynthia screams.**

**Enter Max. “Back off, freak!” She brandishes a big, hard, gleaming shotgun.**

**Cynthia clings to Max’s leg. “Max!”**

You smile. It’s a bitter smile, not cute, the kind you would not want anyone to see. Who writes this shit? You wonder. The Hive? One of their lackeys? It’s so stupid, but it’s also the boy lead in a feature film. It could be your big break. You’re going to sell the hell out of this shit.

“You an actress?” The woman who gave you her seat asks.



*Fuck, not now, you think as you realize she's been standing very close, her leg almost touching yours. You also become aware that this whole time she's been staring down at your tits. You want to tell her to get lost, but when you look up at her you have a bright, pretty smile on your face, and you gush. "I am!" Batting your eyes. "I'm just going over my lines," you say, as you brush your hair back from your face, hoping she'll take the hint and leave you alone.*

She doesn't. "You're so pretty," she says, her eyes still caressing your breasts. "I bet you're really good."

*Like being pretty has anything to do with being a good actress!* You think, but you hide that annoyance, just smiling even more. "Well, I try my best," you say, with proper boyish modesty.

"Listen," she says, and you think you know what's coming. She's going to ask you for your number, and you're going to have no choice but to go out with her at least once. She's the kind of woman who won't take no for an answer. You can tell. She surprises you, though, as she pulls out her wallet and hands you a card. "I'm sure you get this all the time, but I'm an agent. First Talent."

You take the card as the train lurches to a halt. "This is my stop," you say, apologetically, as you offer her your arm. She helps you up, puts her hand on the small of your back and walks you toward the train door.

"Give me a call," she says, and you can't help but giggle and glance back at her over your shoulder as you step from the train. She seems—different?

You look at the card. It's a good card. Classy, embossed, vellum. Her name is right there on the card. George H. Pearson. Representative. First Talent. You put the card carefully in your purse, thinking, maybe this is my lucky day.



First Talent is one of the top talent agencies in the world.

The auditions are being held at Cavern Studios. The waiting room is crowded with boys, most of them shames, like you, wearing pretty boy dresses. There are a few boys there who've been claimed, and they stand out from the rest of you in their skirts and blouses. It's an unfair advantage, you think, sour, jealous. Their clothes alone help them stand out from the crowd. How are you supposed to separate yourself from all of these other pretty boys in their pretty boy dresses?

Well, you decide, focusing yourself, sitting, your purse in your lap. You'll just have to be the best actress they see, won't you? As you glance over your sides, you start your mantra: I am a great actress. The world needs my talent. I'm sick of waiting tables. I am meant for better things. I am a great actress... the world needs my talent...

"Katherine? Katherine Rose?"

You look up at the personal assistant who just called your name. Like most assistants, he's a pretty little thing. He's wearing a long, black dress, a red scarf that matches his pumps, and a pretty, butterfly brooch. Real diamonds. A boy can tell. He clearly found himself a woman.

"Yes?" You say, smiling as you stand.

"They're ready for you."

You walk into the room and smile and wave with your fingertips at the table of women. There's a camera woman as well, and a blank backdrop against the wall opposite the table. "Hey, Katherine," the woman to the far left says. "I'm the casting director, Frank Walls, and to my right this is the assistant director, Jack Harold and the cinematographer, Burt Devins."

"It's so nice to meet you all," you say, putting your hand to your chest. In fact, you find it a little intimidating to be the only boy in a room full of powerful women. It makes you nervous, but that's good. You're supposed to be scared in this scene, and so you will use that, and you allow that feeling of anxiety build. You don't want them to see that, though, not yet, so you smile and toss your hair wanting them to think—flirty, fun, easy to work with.

"I'll be reading for Jason and Max. Do you have any questions before we start?" Frank says.

"I think I'm ready," you say, spotting the X marked on the floor with tape and taking your mark. Jack, the assistant director, is wearing a beret and dark sunglasses, she looks bored, and Burt, the cinematographer has her tattooed arms crossed over her chest she is just ogling your body, shamelessly undressing you with her eyes. Good, you tell yourself even as his stare makes you cringe. Good. You'll feed on this, too, the feelings of insecurity and anxiety it brings out in you when women look at

you like that. She makes you feel vulnerable, and you need that for this scene.



‘Oh,’ Frank says. “And that’s our tech, Andy. When she gives you the signal, go.”

You nod and look at Andy, who has her head down, looking into the view screen on the back of the camera, one arm raised above her head like she’s about to

signal the start of a race.

You take a deep breath and focus. Andy drops her hand at the same time as she says, “go.”

You scream. It’s a blood curdling scream. An A-lister scream, and you’re off, not thinking anymore, but lost in the role, a frightened boy being pursued by a terrifying woman. You draw on your experiences, times when you’ve been alone, when you thought a woman was following you...

Your heart races, thumping, pounding so loud you can hear it. “Help! Someone help me!”



Frank pounds her palms on the table. Thump. Thump. Thump.

You squeal and drop to the ground, hot tears rolling down your cheeks. “God,” you cry out, the room now a tear-smeared, gaussian blur, “if you can hear me, please send someone to rescue me! Please!”

Frank, in a plain, monotone voice, just giving you the line, no acting: “Not even God can help you now. Chainsaw roars.”

You scream, putting your hands to your cheeks, and scream again.

Frank reads: “Enter Max. ‘Back off, freak!’ She brandishes a big, hard, gleaming shotgun.”

You mime clinging to a leg and cry out, “Max!”

“And scene,” Frank says.

“Got it,” Andy says.

“Good, good,” Jack says as you wipe your tears and force yourself to smile.

“I can do it again if you’d like?” You say.

“I think we’re good,” Frank says. “Thanks for coming in.”

“You got great tits,” Burt says, and she’s still looking at you like a piece of meat. “They’d look good on camera.”

“Or in my mouth,” Jack says, and all three women chuckle.

Assholes. You wish you could say something, let them know how gross it makes you feel when they talk about your body like

that, but they're just girls being girls. No one wants to work with a boy who gets his panties in a wad over every little thing. You just smile and grab your purse.

"Thanks so much for seeing me," you say, shrugging your shoulders, lifting those tits, letting them bounce when you drop your shoulders down. A boy has to use what he's got.

The assistant opens the door for you, and when you make your way back out into the holding room, one of the other pretty boys smiles and nods. "Great scream," he says.

"Thanks," you say, pleased. If a boy wants to work in this business, everyone knows he better be able to scream. You've spent hours on the rooftop of your building practicing your screams. You make your way to the boy's room and wipe off the tear smeared mascara from your cheeks, fix your makeup. You smile at yourself. You nailed it. You know you did. Maybe this was it. Maybe this would be your big break?

And even if it wasn't, well, you have George's card in your purse. You just might be on your way to landing with a top talent agency, and then, who knows?

You drift from the studio on a cloud, dreaming of red carpet movie premieres, talk show interviews, magazine covers. There's nothing wrong with it, you tell yourself.

After all, a boy can dream.