

I woke up on the nature trail, the sunlight piercing through the trees and warming my face. My head throbbed, and for a moment, I just lay there, staring up at the leaves swaying gently above me. Everything from the night before was a haze, disjointed flashes of sound and sensation.

Instinctively, I checked my pockets—wallet, phone, keys. All there. That was something, at least. I glanced at my phone. 10:00 AM. A wave of surprise washed over me. No one had come looking for me? No one had called? I shook off the thought, pulling myself to my feet. My muscles protested, stiff from the awkward night on the ground.

By the time I got back to the dorm, the familiar sound of Harry singing off-key in the shower greeted me. I dropped onto my bed with a sigh, running a hand through my tangled hair. The memories from last night came rushing back—Kate, the walk, the kiss... and then nothing. Just darkness. It didn't make sense.

The bathroom door creaked open, steam rolling out as Harry stepped into the room, towel slung low around his waist, drying his hair. "Morning, sunshine," he said with a smirk. "Where'd you get to last night? Thought you bailed on us."

"Kate—" The name barely left my mouth before Harry jumped in.

"Kate?" His grin widened. "Damn, Ethan! Didn't think you had it in you. What a dog!"

I shook my head, frowning. "It wasn't like that. Something was... weird."

"Yeah, yeah," he said, chuckling. "Let me guess—too much to drink? Happens to the best of us."

I wanted to agree, to let his easy dismissal smooth over the unease knotting my stomach, but it didn't sit right. "Yeah," I muttered. "Probably that."

But I wasn't convinced. The rest of the day passed in a blur of restless thoughts. At lunch, I pushed my food around my plate while Harry chattered on. In the library, the words on the page blurred together, my mind drifting back to the clearing and the way Kate's glowing eyes seemed to linger even now. By the time I hit the gym, the distraction had turned into a dull ache behind my eyes.

Scarlett was at the desk, as usual, her crimson braid catching the light as she looked up from her clipboard. She must've noticed something was off because she came over mid-workout, her gaze sharp and assessing.

"You okay?" she asked, her tone softer than usual.

"Yeah, just... late night," I replied, wiping sweat from my brow. "Feeling it today, I guess."

She raised an eyebrow, clearly unconvinced. Then, in a rare moment of vulnerability, she rested her hand lightly on my arm. "If you need to talk, you know where to find me." She smiled faintly and slid a small piece of paper into my hand. Her number.

"Thanks," I said, pocketing it. It was a nice gesture, but it didn't stop the nagging itch in my head.

That itch only grew worse as the day wore on, building into a full-blown headache by the time I got back to the dorm. The hot water of the shower did little to help. Standing there with the water running over me, I let out a groan. "Never drinking again," I muttered.

Harry's laugh cut through the thin walls. "Bullshit," he called back.

I chuckled despite myself, but the tension didn't leave. As I dried my hair in front of the mirror, something caught my eye—a flicker of movement in the glass.

I froze, staring at the reflection. A girl? For a second, I swore it was someone else staring back at me—dark hair like mine, eyes with that same strange intensity, but... not me. I blinked hard. Once. Twice. By the third time, it was just my reflection.

I exhaled shakily, pressing my hands to the sink. “Get it together,” I muttered, but my heart was still pounding.

Sleep didn’t come easily that night. The images, the sounds, they all chased me as I tossed and turned. I watched the clock tick past midnight, then 1 AM, and still, my mind refused to settle. Whatever had happened last night felt like it was just the beginning, but I had no answers—only questions that wouldn’t stop circling my thoughts.

Tomorrow was back to lectures. Maybe the routine would help. Or maybe it wouldn’t.

Waking up to Harry shaking me awake was nothing new. His voice, somewhere between concerned and amused, cut through the fog in my head.

“Nightmares?” he asked, glancing at me as I sat up.

I blinked at him, confused, before realizing I was drenched in sweat. My shirt clung to me uncomfortably, and my hair stuck to my forehead. “Yeah... must’ve been,” I mumbled, wiping my face with my sleeve. My head throbbed, sharper than yesterday’s dull ache.

Harry frowned but didn’t press. I stumbled over to my desk, popped a couple of aspirin, and chased them with water. The pounding eased slightly, but it didn’t go away entirely. What hit me harder, though, was the hunger. I was starving, the kind of ravenous that made my stomach feel like a hollow pit.

At breakfast, I inhaled my food—two, maybe three times what I’d usually eat. Even Harry stared as I went back for another plate.

“You didn’t eat much yesterday?” he asked, watching me shovel eggs into my mouth.

I shrugged. “Yeah, probably that.” It was easier to just agree, though even I wasn’t convinced.

The first lecture of the day was economics, and for once, I was glad. It was one of the few things that could hold my attention. But halfway through, the headache came roaring back, drilling into my skull with such intensity that I had to squeeze my eyes shut for a moment. Harry wasn’t in this class, and the absence of his easy presence only made it worse.

I gritted my teeth and powered through, leaning on the one thing that had always gotten me by: determination. By the time the lecture ended, I felt like I’d run a marathon. And then the hunger returned.

At lunch, I devoured plate after plate. Harry raised an eyebrow as I went back for seconds. Then thirds.

“Okay, what’s going on with you?” he asked, narrowing his eyes. “You’ve eaten enough for three people.”

I waved him off, trying to sound casual. “I guess I didn’t eat much yesterday.”

“Uh-huh,” he said, clearly unconvinced but dropping it.

As we left the cafeteria, we had a couple of hours before the next lecture. Harry suggested heading to the library to prep for tomorrow’s classes. I agreed, though the walk across campus started to feel like a marathon.

About halfway there, the pounding in my skull turned unbearable. It felt like my head was going to split open. My vision blurred, and my steps faltered.

“Ethan!” Harry grabbed my arm as I staggered, barely keeping me upright.

I leaned heavily against him, the world spinning. “I’m fine,” I muttered, though the words felt hollow even to me.

“You’re *not* fine,” he shot back, his voice laced with worry. “Come on, we’re going to the nurse’s office.”

“No,” I protested weakly. “The dorm. Just... the dorm.”

Harry hesitated but finally nodded. “Fine. Dorm it is.” He practically carried me the rest of the way, his shoulder bracing most of my weight.

By the time we reached the room, I was barely holding it together, collapsing onto my bed as soon as we got inside. The headache wasn’t just a pounding anymore—it felt like something was trying to tear its way out of my skull. Whatever was happening to me, it wasn’t normal.

Pain exploded through my body, ripping me from any coherent thought. I doubled over on the bed, clutching my stomach as if it might stop the sensation tearing through me. It didn’t. My body convulsed, sending me tumbling to the floor, where I landed on my hands and knees. Every nerve felt like it was on fire.

“What’s happening to you?” Harry’s voice cracked, but I couldn’t respond. My throat burned, and all I could manage was a guttural scream—loud, raw, primal. The sound morphed mid-roar, higher, softer, feminine.

*What the hell was happening to me?*

I felt my throat constrict, as if it were being pulled apart and remade. My screams became sharper, more delicate, the sound alien to my ears. Then came the sensation of my hair—thickening, lengthening, tumbling down my back until it spilled onto the floor in a cascade. I tried to push myself up, but my body refused to cooperate.

The cracking started next. My hips shifted with a sickening pop, flaring outward as if something inside me had snapped and rebuilt itself in an instant. My legs stretched, the muscles reshaping beneath my skin. The pain was unbearable, yet something about it felt oddly... right, as if my body was fitting into a mold it had always been meant for.

A strangled moan escaped my lips as the changes spread. My thighs thickened, pressing tightly together where my manhood had once been. That’s when I realized—it was gone. I felt an unfamiliar warmth, a new emptiness where something else now rested. My head tilted back involuntarily, and I gasped as my muscles tensed and grew. Strength surged through me, but the changes weren’t done.

Fat shifted in ways I couldn’t comprehend. I could feel my jeans tightening, then ripping as my ass swelled larger and larger. The sound of fabric tearing echoed in my ears, but I barely noticed it over the rush of sensations flooding my body. My chest was next. It started small, just slight mounds under my shirt. Then they grew. And grew. And grew. The fabric strained against them until it finally burst apart, leaving me exposed as my breasts swelled into round, heavy globes.

I collapsed onto the floor, panting heavily, my energy completely drained. My body felt foreign, like a stranger’s. The floor was cool against my skin, but every inch of me burned, trembling from the transformation.

“E-Ethan?” Harry’s voice was barely a whisper. “Are you okay?”

“I... I think so,” I rasped. My voice. It wasn’t mine. It was... higher. Softer. Feminine. “I just feel dizzy...”

My legs wobbled as I tried to stand, and Harry rushed forward to catch me. His hands on my arms steadied me, though his face was pale, his eyes wide with shock.

“Are you... still you?” he asked hesitantly.

“Of course, I’m me,” I snapped, though my own words sounded unsure. “Why wouldn’t I be?”

He didn’t answer, instead guiding me toward the bathroom. “You need to see this,” he said quietly.

The mirror came into view, and I froze. Staring back at me wasn’t my reflection—not *me*. It was... her. The same girl I’d seen yesterday. Dark, cascading hair framed her delicate but striking features, and her wide, mysterious eyes looked as stunned as I felt. My lips parted, trembling, and I screamed. A high-pitched, piercing scream.

The sound sent my head spinning, and I had to grip the counter to keep myself upright. My gaze dropped downward, and my heart sank. My chest—my impossibly huge chest—blocked the view of my feet entirely. I brought my hands up, staring at them, then ran them through my unfamiliar hair. It was real. All of it. Too real.

“What the hell happened to me?” I whispered, my voice barely audible.

Harry’s voice cut through the haze. “If I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn’t have believed it,” he said, still staring at me like I was some kind of science experiment. “It’s like... something out of a movie.”

I nodded weakly, my hands shaking as I pressed them to my temples. “I feel... fine, I guess. The headache’s gone. Completely.” I laughed bitterly. “That’s odd, isn’t it?”

Harry didn’t laugh. He guided me back into the dorm, his face unusually solemn. For once, he looked as lost as I felt.

“I have no idea what to do,” he admitted, sitting down heavily on the edge of the bed.

Neither did I. My mind raced, panic swelling in waves. The transformation, the pain, the... changes—I couldn’t wrap my head around any of it. My body felt alien, and the lingering thought that it wasn’t over gnawed at the edges of my mind.

Harry picked up his phone, and the sound of him unlocking it snapped me out of my spiral.

“Who are you calling?” I asked sharply, my voice trembling with panic.

“Sophie and Amy,” he said firmly, his tone leaving no room for argument. “They’ll know what to do.”

My stomach twisted. Sophie and Amy—our childhood friends. If anyone could help, it was them. But would they even believe what Harry was about to tell them? Would *anyone*? I opened my mouth to protest, but the words died in my throat. I didn’t have a better idea. I didn’t have any idea.

Harry tapped the screen, putting the call on speaker. Both of their voices came through almost immediately, overlapping with concern.

“Harry?” Sophie’s voice was sharp. “What’s wrong?”

“You don’t usually call both of us,” Amy added, her tone lighter but still cautious.

“It’s Ethan,” Harry said, his words spilling out in a jumble. “Something’s happened. It’s... it’s bad. You need to come over. Like, now. Right now.”

There was a beat of silence, and then Sophie's voice broke through. "What do you mean? Is he hurt?"

"No—yes—I mean, not exactly," Harry stammered, running a hand through his hair. "Just... please, trust me. You need to see this for yourselves."

Amy's voice came next, firmer now. "We're on our way."

The call ended abruptly, the silence that followed almost deafening. I could hear my own heart pounding as Harry set his phone down and looked at me.

"They're coming," he said simply.

I nodded, my breath shallow. Waves of panic surged through me, making my hands tremble. Sophie and Amy might know what to do—but what if they didn't? What if no one could help me?

The knock on the door came faster than I expected, and before Harry could even answer it, Sophie and Amy let themselves in. They were nearly identical, as always—both with long, wavy auburn hair cascading down their backs and sharp green eyes that seemed to catch every detail in a room. The only real difference between them was their style: Sophie preferred darker tones, a leather jacket slung over her shoulders and ripped jeans hugging her frame, while Amy was more casual, wearing a cream-colored sweater and sneakers.

Their gazes immediately fell on me, sprawled awkwardly on the edge of the bed in Harry's hoodie that barely covered anything. The scowls they shot me were scalding.

"You said it was an emergency," Sophie said, crossing her arms and glaring at Harry. "But hiring a cow-titted hooker isn't exactly life or death."

My mouth dropped open, unsure if I should feel offended or laugh. "Excuse me?" I managed.

"Seriously, Harry?" Amy chimed in, rolling her eyes. "What's the matter with you?"

Harry didn't flinch. His expression was stone serious as he pointed at me. "That's Ethan."

The twins froze, glancing at each other before bursting into laughter. It was the kind of loud, unrestrained laugh that had filled our childhood. For a moment, I almost forgot about everything that had happened. Almost.

Then their laughter faded when they realized Harry wasn't laughing with them. Sophie's brow furrowed, and Amy tilted her head like she was seeing me for the first time.

I swallowed hard, feeling their eyes boring into me. "It's me," I said quietly, the sound of my own soft, feminine voice still jarring.

The twins stopped laughing entirely. Sophie looked skeptical, while Amy's confusion turned into something closer to suspicion. Without a word, Amy pulled out her phone, her movements deliberate as she scrolled through her contacts.

"What are you doing?" Harry asked, watching her.

"Proving this is bullshit," Amy said, hitting the call button. A second later, the tattered remains of my jeans on the floor began to buzz. The ringtone echoed in the room, and I reached down, picking up my phone with trembling hands.

Amy's eyes widened, and she ended the call. "No way," she breathed.

"What the hell happened?" Sophie demanded, her tone sharper now.

The floodgates opened, and I told them everything—the splitting headaches, the dizziness, the transformation. Harry chimed in, recounting how it had started and what he'd seen. I could see the disbelief on their faces, but they didn't interrupt.

When we finished, there was a long pause before Sophie broke the silence. “Did anything weird happen before all this started?”

Harry and I exchanged glances. “There was this girl,” he said finally. “Kate. Ethan—uh, met her last night.”

Sophie frowned, clearly filing the name away. “We should find her at some point,” she said thoughtfully, before turning back to me. “How do you feel? You know, besides... all this.”

“I feel... fine, I guess,” I said hesitantly. “The headaches are gone, but I feel—” My thighs rubbed together as I shifted uncomfortably, a strange warmth spreading through me. I bit my lip, unsure of how to say it.

Amy smirked, catching my subtle movement. “A little frustrated, huh?” she teased, laughing when my face turned red. “Well, maybe put on some clothes. Those—” she gestured to my massive chest—“are staring at me.”

I sighed. “I don't have anything that fits.”

Amy left the room without a word, returning a few minutes later with a bundle of clothes she must have borrowed from someone else. They were large and baggy, but even they stretched tightly over my curves. Pulling them on was a challenge, the fabric clinging to my skin as I struggled to contain myself.

Sophie leaned against the wall, watching me with an almost detached curiosity. “So... what now?”

The room fell into silence as we all considered the question. None of us had an answer.

“We can't just... tell everyone you're Ethan,” Sophie said finally, crossing her arms. “That would make things harder. You need a new name.”

I frowned but didn't argue. They were right—walking around calling myself Ethan in this body would just invite questions I wasn't ready to answer. We tossed around a few names, but when Harry suggested “Eleanor,” something about it clicked.

“Ellie,” I murmured, testing the name. It felt... oddly natural. I nodded. “Okay. Eleanor. Ellie.”

“Great,” Sophie said with a grin. “Now we have to get you some proper clothes. Those... aren't cutting it.”

Amy smirked. “Shopping trip?”