

The Emancipation of Mallory

Chapter 1:

Snow fell softly on Elizabeth Street. A green car rounded the turn, a long-suffering creature; the old Accord's patina was renewed to a faux-sheen by the melted snow, but the clacking from the engine suggested a sorely needed valve adjustment. Inside the cabin, coworkers chatted happily.

Mallory was grateful to be in the warm car. She had spent all afternoon receiving shipments, piled back-to-back due to the snowstorm earlier that week. All spare hands were needed at the truck dock, right to shift's end, and her gloves and earmuffs did little to keep the frigid air at bay. With the owner being a tad miserly with the heat, Mallory couldn't quite shake the chill, and was thankful to thaw on the commute home.

She gathered her effects. "Thanks again, Jay."

The car pulled away and Mallory walked up the crumbled stairs to the building. Decades from its respectable origins, the tenement had become the essence of dilapidation. A ongoing, malignant marathon to the bottom was waging between the landlord and the tenants. Its occupants were always swinging between poverty and lower-class wage slavery, and the property teetered between foreclosure and being condemned. The elevator, of course, was out of order, and she wondered if it weren't for the better. Climbing four flights of stairs was superior to holding your breath against the stink of urine and vomit inside that sarcophagus.

She arrived at number 407, and fetched out her keys. The growing wave of anxiety squeezed her, and she took a deep breath to force it back.

Maybe today will be different?

Experience squashed that odd hope, and resigned, she diminished and plunged her key into the lock.

"You were dressed like THAT?"

The door barely had time to latch behind her before the gauntlet was thrown. She gathered her resolve and turned to face her nemesis in silence.

A dusty, bloated mass sat sunk-in to the tortured chair, like a grotesque, mutant gypsy moth. Staleness exuded from the lump, as it had for years, seeping into the thick carpet and curing it stiff. Smoke wafted up from the ashtray to a billious halo of reek above her head. This was Mavis, on edge from having nothing but daytime television, cigarettes, and box wine to stem away the looming horror of introspection.

She hated sparring with Mavis. Every God-damned day continued the eternal campaign of grief-mongering. It sometimes helped Mallory to dehumanize her, remove from Mavis the holy aura of

"Mother" and regard her as some horrible mythical monster, some apex predator of negativity.

And, frankly, the metaphor worked. By depriving her of humanistic, caring, motherly qualities, Mallory could more accurately predict its behavior. The beast craved nourishment, and it demanded to be fed. She would either provide willingly, or have it extracted from her without her cooperation. It didn't matter; the beast would stop at nothing for a meal.

"I know you're a lazy, ungrateful slut, but this is just appalling. Disrespectful!"

"These are my work clothes, Mother," Mallory said flatly. It was important to remain well-grounded when sparring. The beast didn't care about logic, reason, or sanity, but it would feed on cognitive dissonance if given an inch.

The creature's proboscis foamed, and the cigarette danced madly. "Nothing's wrong with your ugly-ass uniform. It's what everybody can see you're wearing underneath."

The dander-golem heaved and flopped out of its cocoon. The carpet crunched beneath, a though a lawn crisp from frost.

Like a sea of potato chips, mused Mallory.

"You're wearing one of your old bras, popping out the damb thing like a harlot. Does your new one not cram 'em together good enough for the boys? Don't act like this is something snuck up on you over lunch, you went out the door like that this morning."

Discipline kept Mallory's mouth shut. Protesting would prove nothing, even if reality was on her side. Still, what was the dustbat on about today?

She looked briefly down at her chest and discovered a noticeable bulging in her shirt that was absolutely not supposed to be there. The crease of her flesh above the edge of the cups could have, with a deep breath, been upgraded from unmistakable to prominent. There was just enough happening to embarrass those caught staring, yet anyone red-blooded would have taken tally.

It appeared that today, reality was being fickle.

Mavis read the surprised reaction and pushed, "I got you that expensive, fancy bra you just HAD to have for your birthday, and now you're squishing yourself into your old one, why? Not enough attention?" She pulled a drag on her cigarette, prodding the caterpillars in her brain to do some thinking.

"I bought it with my own money," Mallory responded.

Half-enlightenment flickered, and Mavis' cracked lips smiled mockingly, "Oh, right, you have to HAND wash and HANG dry your new bra, because it's SPESH-SHUL. You got lazy and waited to the last minute. Didn't give it enough time to dry, didja?"

Mallory had only had to wash it once since she bought it, but that episode was fraught with drama. She knew her mother was just annoyed at having to witness the garment at all. Seeing it hang-dry in the laundry forced her to acknowledge its existence, and anything that reminded Mavis of the new lingerie seemed to ruffle her.

Mavis continued, "You coulda bought two, rotated 'em, but you aren't smart or sensible. I keep this roof over our heads and food on the table, all so you can go spending your money like a fool. I may as well paid for the thing, like I paid for everything else."

"I give you all the rent you ask for, and help with the groceries. Like we agreed." These were old maneuvers. If it weren't for the surprise under her shirt, Mallory might have been bored. She was still processing this new development. Maybe it wasn't anxiety squeezing her ribcage this whole time? She looked down again at the two globes chortling maliciously in her top, and thought about how she spent most the afternoon zipped into her coat. Maybe she missed noticing them in the morning due to lighting? She wasn't exactly a morning person. Either way, she looked a little frumpy, maybe a little slutty, she conceded. But was this all really something worth caring about?

It's exactly the sort of thing Mother would care about, Mallory concluded.

"Well, I carted your ass to that fancy lingerie boo-teek. Two hour drive! For A bra! One, uno, singular! \$100 for a fitting and une brassière. Oh, how you beeeegged and pleeaaded, 'Mommy, can you puh-lease take me to Syracuse?'" Amplify to absurdity. Mavis the Mothra-kin knew that one tactic very well. If her target wasn't going to have a meltdown, then she would have to have one instead.

"If there was someplace closer, I would have gone there."

"I even offered to take you to Macy's. Coulda done my own shopping at the mall. But nooo! Macy's wasn't GOOD enough!" Mavis was getting closer.

As if you ever have any money left over after your smokes, thought Mallory. "Macy's shut down after New Year's, Mother."

"Then you waited too long!" Mavis accused.

"I wanted a proper fitting," Mallory was running out of facts to deflect with, and moving into the dangerous realm of opinions.

"And Macy's would've done that! Why the hell you needed one so bad is beyond me, you went how

many years picking up whatever you needed at Wal-Mart." For Mavis, the offense was not that her advice was ignored, but that someone else had earned and saved up for nice things. It reminded her of her inability to forgo pleasure to invest in the future; instead hurling herself at substances and vapid entertainment in consumptive whoredom. "I tried to be firm, save you from throwing good money in the trash, but Gawd! How you...persisted!"

"You asked what I wanted for my birthday," said Mallory, "I asked for a ride."

"And they swindled you good, too!" continued Mavis, sensing the endgame, "Feeding right into your ego. Puffing you up on some vanity size, convincing you were a D-cup..." This had finally touched a nerve.

"Why the fuck do you care, Mom?! We've been over this!" Mallory snapped. Her stoic façade finally slipped, her exasperation showed weakness, and Mavis drove in.

"It's horseshit, is what it is! Trumping things up to make you feel like you need something special and unique. Just vanity and ego marketing to justify jacking up the price."

Mavis continued, she was on a roll. "That's what's wrong with you, what's always been wrong with you. You wanna be special, different, without working for it. First you were vegan, then you were kissing that one girl, then you were gluten intolerant. Now you think you're shaped special and need expensive support. Next you'll have scoliosis and need a corset. It's all about the attention, and don't think I can't see through it!"

Critical mass had been achieved, especially with the false accusation of being bisexual, but Mallory had too much on her mind to suffer this charade any longer. For these moments, she kept an arsenal of very potent one-offs that would accelerate without her having to fake (or actually have) a breakdown herself.

"Mom, have you been day-drinking again? We've been over this with the counselor; you don't have any self-control."

Nuclear launch codes activated. Klaxons wailed.

In event of emergency, break glass and mash red button. Prayers to deities and ancestors advised.

Mavis swelled with anger and roiled into a tirade. She ripped a book off the shelf and flung it. Mallory dodged most of it, just getting clipped on the hip, and made her escape to her room, locking herself in. She braced the door with a chair and crouched into the corner, listening to Mavis scream and shriek and beat on the door.

Don't cry. Keep it together, don't fucking cry.

Mavis usually gave up after three waves, but she was in particularly good form tonight, and really enjoying herself. Again and again, she assaulted the door like a moth trying to fuck a lightbulb. She allowed herself the pleasure of a fifth and final round of cussing and raging before she retired. Soon, the familiar squeak of the liquor cabinet and bottles clinking signaled to Mallory that their daily ritual was over, and Mavis would be passed out within the hour.

Only 7PM. Maybe I'll have a good night after all.

Slowly, she stood and took a moment to settle her heartrate. She then began to clean herself up, just enough for the sake of dignity, clearing the run mascara and smudged makeup. She couldn't wait to be free of this unhygienic home, wondering how much less paint she would use on her face if it wasn't practically protecting it. She had liked how she looked that morning, and she stepped back to take in her full getup and how much it had fallen.

Many styles and outfits had come and gone, all budget restrained, but she still managed to alter her looks drastically between them. It was one way she could still be in control of SOMETHING, in control of herself. This latest episode she had dyed her hair black, and kept it a short, androgynous cut. She painted freckles on and was contemplating a new piercing for a nose-stud. Band shirts and giant hoodies were preferred, paired with tight jeans that she was growing more fond of. Her backside and hips had filled in quite nicely once she had gotten back to a healthy weight, but there always lingered the fear of exploding into a blob like her mother and sister to throw her back into the arms of an eating disorder.

It took them a couple kids to get there, chill out.

For now, the cracked mirror showed the black pants and maroon polo of Dumac's Natural Health & Foods. The polo was struggling to conceal the signs of crowding of her chest. It was time to investigate. She peeled her uniform top off and surveyed the anomaly.

A luscious and potent sight was revealed. There proudly sat her breasts, confidently billowing up out of the cups of a beautiful seafoam demi with cream accents. Her quiet, slow gasp pushed her breasts bulging over the edge of the fabric. Turning to the side, she pulled her shoulders back, making them pop out even more.

Shit!

The trance set in, and her motions became slow and dreamlike. Deliberately, the hooks were undone and the bra slid off. This time a new sensation of heaviness affronted her. She had felt the difference a bra makes in support, but this time, it felt far more substantial than she could ever remember, as her unsupported breasts felt their first significant challenge to their youthful perkiness. Her eyes opened wide, tenderly lifting up her left tit on the back of her right hand.

Shit! Shit! Shit! It's really working!

She discarded the bra to the floor. No, this was not the silver-with-peach longline bra that she had been fitted into six weeks ago. This new one arrived two weeks ago, and had been ordered a week before that.

Mallory cupped and squeezed her chest, assuring herself of their legitimacy, and luxuriating in their dense, firm heft. She mouthed a couple Wows and woke out of her trance to check the time.

I'll give her an hour. Plenty of time for good work.

In complete contrast to the distress not 15 minutes before, Mallory was humming and bouncing. Her room transformed from a pit of depression into a refuge of high energy, and the playlist pumping bliss through her cheap earbuds lofted her higher.

A large bottle was pulled out from under the nightstand, and she knocked over a few other glass bottles in her enthusiasm. Pills of all colors and sizes were stuffed behind that little door, but they all had one thing in common: Dumac's brand label was emblazoned on most every one.

Fenugreek. Wild Yam. Fennel. Crushed Bovine Ovary. Pueraria Mirifica. Hops. Saw Palmetto. All of these were in the multitude. Bottles of flaxseed, lavender, and other oils. A few tubs, including a medicinal-looking one of progesterone cream.

Mallory propped herself up in her bed and pulled out a notebook tucked between the bed and nightstand. Inside were journal records tracing back to October the previous year. Recipes and methods were written in the back, and a twice-a-day notes filled each page with a week's worth of logs. Temperature, weight, doses, sessions, times, and observations detailed each entry. She penned in below her latest:

Feb 20 AM

Temp Normal, 117.3 lbs, Rec. F @ 6:30AM, Pro. B @ 6:00AM 30 min w/flax.

Begin taking temp to time peak estrogen.

Feb 20 PM

Temp Normal, Rec. F @ 7:30PM, Pro. B @ 7:30PM 45 min w/flax.

Maintaining recipe F until temp shows ovulation, then switch to recipe C.

New size:

She paused and looked at the barely used bra laying on the floor. She didn't think she was going to need it so soon, and couldn't have predicted that it would be rendered useless so quickly. A self-satisfied smirk spread across her lips. She was in control. She could not be denied. She had overwhelmed that garment. Made it worthless to her. Beneath her. She had crushed it, dominated it, and discarded it in

three weeks since she first ever thought about it.

To the casual observer, Mallory now posed a full, healthy, if average-appearing bust. The boobhounds would find her chest small for their tastes, a good handful; perhaps nice C-cups, nothing outrageous, yet delightful. But the connoisseur would recognize that Mallory was just on the cusp of...something substantial.

She finished the entry.

New size: 28DD > 28 DDD/E, 3 weeks

Shame... she thought as she allowed her smirk to explode into a goofy grin. The lamp was turned off, the music turned up, and the massaging began.