



Reluctant Press presents:

The Bimbo Ray

Dee Dee Perri



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. PAGANI

A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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The Bimbo Ray

Dee Dee Perri

Chapter 1

Charlie Watson looked far too young to be working in Dr. Holman's Experimental Genetics Laboratory. Slender, very short and utterly without body hair, he could have readily passed as a young female of say twelve rather than a seventeen year old high school junior. His delicate features and long blond hair enhanced the gender ambiguity; it was the latter which, at this moment, whipped across his narrow shoulders as he rotated his head to face the arrival of his co-worker. "Well?" He said in his high, childlike voice. He spun off the laboratory stool with the excessive energy of one half his age and, with the ridiculously oversized white lab coat he wore trailing across the tile floor like the train on a bridal gown, crossed the gap between him and the man who had just entered. All this took place in a blink of an eye. "It *did* work!" He said as he looked up at the man's face. There was certainty in his pale blue eyes as if the out come had not the slightest possibility of failure. But startled surprise quickly replaced the look of certainty and then that too was replaced with confusion as he read the man's face. He retreated only to stumble as his foot tangled in the much too long garment he was wearing; the latter he ripped off and threw to the floor as anger abruptly replaced confusion. "Show me!" The boy ordered in a voice that now squeaked.

"Sorry kid." Darwin P. Hornsblyth, doctoral student and primary caretaker of this small piece of Dr. Holman's extensive laboratory empire, shrugged and then handed the boy the DNA test results. "Life sucks sometimes OK?" He shrugged again and then pushed closed the laboratory door behind him. "Zip, nothing. All the chromosomes are intact. Maybe the acoustic signal wasn't applied long enough or the amplitude..."

"Eight hundred milliseconds were *precisely* long enough." Snapped the boy.

There was more than just irritation in that voice realized Darwin. Anger bloomed in the man's gut. This smart assed kid had no respect for him, that was obvious. By even suggesting that there had been *anything* wrong in the experimental procedure, the kid had lumped him, a doctoral student, into the same trash bin he'd assigned to most of the ignorant, stupid humanity he'd met in his short life. Darwin grabbed at his own anger and thrust it down as he forced a thoughtful expression to his face. "Perhaps you miscalculated the resonant frequency..."

"Don't be a complete twit." Snarled Charlie as he nodded toward the equation scrawled across the black board on the far wall. And then, as quickly as it had arisen, the boy's anger vanished. With the attention span of the very immature, he'd already put the whole problem aside. "Whatever." He murmured as he let the DNA test results slip from his fingers and flutter to the floor.

"Yeah." Agreed Darwin, more than a little relieved that the boy wasn't pressing to repeat the experiment or even repeat the DNA tests on the tissue culture. He nodded significantly, "Ah-Dr. Holman's coming down here in a few minutes."

The boy jerked, "Right." And then immediately started for the door.

"Charlie?"

"Yes?"

"Maybe you shouldn't come back hmm?"

The boy stopped and turned, his hand was already on the doorknob. He looked around as if his work here were done and nodded in agreement. "It's been cool Dar. Thanks for letting me use all your neat stuff." And then he was gone.

Darwin Hornsblyth leaned back against the door and let out a long sigh of relief. It had gone easier, far easier than he'd expected. There was no doubt that little Charlie Watson was a genius of the highest order, perhaps another Newton or Einstein. Perhaps... but he was also just a kid and far more immature than most his age, more like a hyperactive twelve year old than his actual late teens. An hour from now he'd be into some other intellectual adventure and this morning's effort, would quickly become something long forgotten. Truth? Darwin envied that talent, that genius for seeing things in an utterly new manner. Another truth, he, Darwin P. Hornsblyth, was a human Xerox machine. He could learn *anything* and remember it perfectly but he didn't have a creative bone in his body. No sir, he could *not* have accomplished what that kid had done this morning if he spent a lifetime trying.

He pushed away from the door after checking to be sure it was locked and then eased down into his chair behind his desk. He pulled out a carefully folded slip of paper from his coat pocket and began to unfold it reverently. Here was his future. Certainly it would constitute the basis of his doctoral dissertation and then would come grants and publications and... well one could envision... some day a Nobel Prize? Not impossible. He carefully smoothed out the paper holding the *real* DNA lab results before laying them on the desktop. Chromosome twenty-one, which constituted less than two percent of the human genome, was gone. Less than a second of exposure to a twelve point six-three megahertz sine wave signal and that tiny bastion of masculinity had been eradicated!

Suddenly there was someone at the door. Darwin jerked and then snatched the document from his desktop and was in the process of stuffing the form into his desk drawer when the door opened. "Doctor?"

Professor John Holman, puffing, his face perpetually red from hypertension looked about in alarm, "Everything all right?"

"Huh?"

The old man spun on his heels to look down the hallway before turning back and catching Darwin's gaze. "Someone saw that *monster* in the building."

"Sir?"

"WATSON'S SON!"

"Oh...yeah. I saw him go by a while ago. That's why I locked the lab door."

"Right. Can't be too careful." He turned and looked apprehensively down the hallway again.

"They never proved that he'd started that fire that burned down the Health Sciences building sir."

The old man simply huffed as he pulled the door closed. "What we need is better security." Darwin simply nodded in agreement. "Anyhow he did destroy the green house behind this very building and that's a cold fact!"

Darwin smirked and then fought to hide that reaction from his major professor. Yeah, acoustics was to Charlie what light was to Newton. The best guess was that the kid had decided that one could stimulate growth in plants using the right acoustic energy. The problem was that energy had also excited the mass of glass that enclosed the greenhouse with the expected effect. "Tough huh, him being the son of Dr. Watson."

It was well known that Doctor Harmon Watson brought in more Federal research money than the rest of the faculty combined; that fact in isolation made his errant son all but untouchable. Needless to say there was little love lost between him and the other science faculty but the administration, knowing which side its bread was buttered on never failed to support Watson or, in the case of his son, could be counted on to look the other way when necessary. "Anyhow," Professor Holman waved his hands in the air, "I'm told that the Academic Senate is *finally* going to pass a resolution prohibiting that monster from coming on campus."

"Really?" A sense of profound relief swept over Darwin as the door to his exploitation of Charlie's discovery opened a bit wider. "Yes sir, I believe we'll all feel a bit more secure if that happens."

~oOo~

Darwin waited until the next morning before offering his 'proposal' of a dissertation topic for his mentor's consideration. Dr. Holman's reaction wasn't at all as he'd expected. The old man's thick eyebrows shot up in surprise, "Destroy chromosome 21? Whatever for my boy?"

“Ah...” The old man had him there all right. Why the ‘y’ chromosome? “Because it can be done?” Darwin paused. It was obvious from Professor Holman’s expression that such an argument was simply inadequate. “Ah...” He was floundering and then he saw the equation Charlie had written on the blackboard yesterday afternoon and remembered the kid’s rationale. “It has a much higher resonance frequency than the other chromosomes.” He stammered. “The ‘y’ chromosome being much smaller than the others...”

The old man looked first appalled and then concerned before he interrupted his student, “Are you actually suggesting that you can *alter* the genetic structures using acoustic energy?” He didn’t wait for Darwin to respond though the younger man’s head was beginning to nod in agreement. “Preposterous my boy, utterly... preposterous.”

“But sir...” Stammered Darwin. He was about to say that he’d already done just that.

“Chromosomes aren’t miniature crystal brandy snifters that one can simply *pop* with a well chosen note played on a violin.” He waved his hand in disgust before continuing. His face, perpetually red to begin with had darkened further, his eyes flashed. “For heaven’s sake Mr. Hornsblyth think through the problem. Chromosomes are embedded in tissue with nearly the *same* density as the chromosomes themselves so even if you could cause the chromosome to resonate, and you can’t, the whole cell mass would respond. Applying enough power, well I’m sure you could destroy the whole cell but not, I’m afraid, just one specific chromosome.” He rolled his eyes and then stabbed his finger at Darwin’s chest, “Science isn’t about trying things willy-nilly my boy.” His finger withdrew and then shot forward again. “Carefully reasoned arguments that lead to a fully documented hypothesis, that’s how *real* science is done.”

Shattered Darwin just stood there groping for a response. He still had, of course, the silver bullet. As Dr. Holman turned away, Darwin fired it into the older man’s retreating backside, “Sir, I’ve already done it.”

“HUH?”

~oOo~

The voice was high, shrill and dripping with acid, “Did you think I wouldn’t find out?”

“Who is this?” Answered Darwin. He knew, of course, precisely who was on the other end of the line.

“Don’t play dumb Dar.” Charlie Watson snarled. “Everyone on campus is talking about it.”

“Ah... Charlie.” Exclaimed Darwin. Once he and Dr. Holman had replicated the original results several times that morning, the breathless professor had scurried about inviting just about everyone in the Biology department for a demonstration. Of course it had become Dr. Holman’s discovery well before lunchtime. Having shouldered aside Charlie Watson, Darwin couldn’t complain too loudly about having the same thing done to him. Completing his dissertation, on the other hand, should be a piece of cake now. “I’m glad you called.”

“Right.” Muttered Charlie. “The discovery’s *mine* and you know it.”

“Do I?” Darwin paused for effect. “Look kid between you, me and the post you were never here- right? Besides if you have an ax to grind you need to talk to Professor Holman OK?”

“Yeah.” The kid’s voice had lost some of its edge. “I heard that the old dork was taking credit for everything.” He laughed.

“Like I said yesterday, life’s not fair.”

“It should be, fair that is.”

“Right kid.”

“Dar?”

“Yeah?”

“I need to come to the lab again.”

“Huh? You’re not allowed on campus Charlie.”

“That’s my problem OK Dar? Besides campus security sucks big time. Hmm, how about ten tonight, just you and me in the lab. Nobody else, especially that jerk Holman.”

Darwin was astounded. “You mean after everything...”

“Com’on Dar you got neat toys and I got some cool ideas...”

“More ideas?” Darwin croaked. Apparently selectively destroying a whole chromosome wasn’t enough for this pint-sized genius.

“Oh yeah. That chromosome thing wasn’t much more than a test of my assumptions. Now I’m ready to do something *interesting*.”

“Jesus.” Darwin swore under his breath. What exactly would this brat called interesting. The possibilities were nearly overwhelming.

“Does that mean yes Dar?”

~oOo~

The kid was in a dress. No that was an understatement mused a shocked Darwin as he opened the laboratory door that night. Charlie’s long blond hair had been artfully crafted into a moderately complex and very feminine hairstyle that sat high on his head exposing dangling ear rings that clung to his ear lobes and a long, slender neck. Just a hint of makeup had transformed his youthful male face into one that was emphatically feminine and years more mature. The pale blue dress matched the color of the boy’s eyes in a most complimentary manner and a bra stuffed with God only knew what created the illusion of a slim hipped but full-busted woman inside. “Charlie?”

Charlie pushed past Darwin. “Close the door.” He said. His high, immature voice seemed neither high nor immature in his current costume, indeed it seemed utterly appropriate.

Darwin turned and gaped as the feminine figure swept past him and then across the laboratory floor trailing a column of... perfume? She stopped. There was no ‘he’ there,

concluded Darwin. The movements, the arm carriage, every aspect of the boy performance was a perfect impersonation of a female. There was no doubt that considerable 'practice' had gone into this presentation. "Charlie?" He croaked again.

Charlie turned, hand on one hip, "Close the door, OK?"

"Right." Darwin shook himself as if to recover from the rude shock he'd just received and then pushed the door shut. "Jesus." He mumbled softly.

Charlie fluttered his mascara enhanced lashes, "Like I said, security on this campus sucks."

Oh yeah it was Charlie all right. "Nice." Added Darwin. "I mean... you look ah-nice..."

"Whatever." Growled Charlie. The feminine mannerisms vanished in an instant as he turned and stomped into the control room.

"Hey." Darwin complained as the boy disappeared from sight. "I... I thought we were going to talk." He added as he hurried across the room. He stopped at the door. Charlie was in the process of loading a CD into the computer. "Hey. Jesus you can't just reconfigure the whole set up." Now the boy's fingers were flying across the keyboard. "What are you doing?" The last was said in a plaintive voice.

"The transducers still set up in the next room?"

"Yeah, so? You want maybe that I get a fresh tissue sample?" The kid just grunted. "Well?"

Finally he seemed to be done. He turned in the swivel chair so as to face Darwin. "What would happen if one were to destroy the 'y' chromosome in an adult?"

"Jesus."

Charlie frowned, "No need to swear Dar. I just asked a simple question."

"Y-you could do that?"

Charlie groaned, "Duh? Tissue sample in a Petri dish verses a whole organism, it's only a question of relative power, OK?"

"Y-you wouldn't want to do that." Responded Darwin nervously.

"You're right." Responded Charlie. He grinned and fluttered his lashes. "But for all the wrong reasons Dar. See you're going to tell me how dangerous that would be, right?" Darwin nodded in agreement. "Well it wouldn't be all that much you know. The evidence is pretty clear that most of the work of the y chromosome is done during fetal development OK? I mean you *know* that right? Anyhow, sperm production would drop to zero. Given enough time the testicles might drop off." He shrugged, "Castration without a knife. Not much really."

Darwin let out a sigh of relief. "So its not worth doing."

"Correct. All the useful information regarding primary and secondary sexual characteristics are controlled on the x chromosome." He stopped. "You *have* studied the report on the Human Genome Project." He stopped and giggled girlishly. "Of course you have. Duh. A graduate student in Genetics." And then he grew serious, "Four genes on the x

chromosome control **all** the others. Switch them off and well... the body wouldn't know what a penis is OK? The default code is female- but everybody knows that. Lacking access to the information to create or even maintain say a penis, well one might reasonably expect rapid degeneration and..."

"Sex change?"

"One hundred percent."

"That's... terrible." Darwin saw Charlie's expression abruptly harden. He stepped back and scanned the boy in the dress. "That's what this is all about isn't it Charlie. You. Want. That." The boy clenched his jaws and threw back his gaze. Fierce determination lurked there. Darwin stumbled back, "No Charlie I can't be a party to that." He jerked his hand stiffly, "Leave."

"Dar." Charlie whined. "Nobody needs to know. I mean no one even knows I'm here and I'll take full responsibility for whatever happens."

"LEAVE NOW!"

Charlie spun back to the computer and hit a key and then darted past the man blocking the door.

"NO YOU DON'T!" Screamed Darwin as he grabbed Charlie by his hair. The latter was the wrong thing to do for in the next instant he was left standing there holding a wig as the boy in the dress opened the door to the test chamber. Darwin dove after him pulling the boy to the ground but it was too late. "Oh fuck!"

Darwin didn't need to look far to identify why he awoke with a sizable knot on his temple. The shattered transducer looked to be precisely the right size to have done the job. He started to sit up and then groaned as a world-class headache made itself apparent. "Charlie?" He croaked. He wasn't surprised when there wasn't any response. He pulled himself up into a sitting position and looked around.

The transducer on the floor wasn't the only one shattered. The whole array had been smoked. The smell of burnt insulation was overpowering. Staggering to his feet, he pushed out of the small test chamber and sucked in a deep breath of less toxic air. There was still a hint in the air of the perfume that Charlie had worn so he surely hadn't been out all that long. "Charlie?" He called out again and again there was no reply.

On the desktop was a short note. "Sorry." It said. "Sorry shit." Growled Darwin as he tore up the note. His anger was instantly replaced by fear. What if the kid had actually wrecked *his* genetic structure? He raced over to the back room and pulled the door open. He had to run a DNA analysis on himself- NOW. God it was going to be a long night. Charlie Watson was a *monster*.

"Dad?"

"Evening Charles." Harmon Watson continued to stare at the computer monitor screen. "I'll be with you in a second." However, as was par for the course, almost ten minutes passed.

Charlie cleared his throat and when that didn't work he said, "Dad?"

"Sorry. OK I'm... ah... done." He said as he clicked on the icon to save the manuscript he was working on and spun around in his swivel chair. The smile that had brightened his eyes transformed into shock for there standing in the doorway was his son in a dress. No not just a dress, makeup... the whole nine yards. "Ah- Charles?"

"You think Mom looked like this when she was my age?"

Flustered Harmon blurted out, "For Pete's sake, what are you doing Charles in that... that..."

"I saw pictures of her when she was just a teenager." Charlie responded ignoring his father's question. "I think I look a lot like her."

His dad collapsed back into his chair, "I didn't know her then, OK? Yeah, sure she might have looked like that. Is this your way of telling me that we're due for a serious father-son talk?" His stomach was producing a prodigious quantity of acid at the moment. He yanked open a drawer and pulled out a half roll of Tums and shoved them into his mouth. As he chewed he continued to stare. "Well?"

Charles 'flittered' across the room to take a side chair. To say that he walked would have been to miss the point entirely. And when his son sat down it was with all the complexity Harmon had always associated with women in skirts. Legs encased in nylon reflected the light as they scissored, one leg crossing the other high and tight across his *son's* knee. "I want to be a girl Dad."

"Huh?"

"Seventeen years I've been your son OK? I mean I've *done* that. It's... not me."

Harmon pulled at his lower lip thoughtfully. He'd always thought of himself as a liberal parent and not prone to forcing stereotypes but this... "You're gay? I mean that's what you're trying to tell me huh Charles? I can live with that you know."

"Dad." Charlie groaned. "Gay? Hardly. I mean if I am a *real* girl then dating boys and *stuff* wouldn't make me gay or nothing..."

"Dating boys and... stuff?" Charles *was* talking about sex with males. A knife went into Harmon's heart. "But you're *not* a girl Charles."

"I am." He shrugged and tossed his long hair, "What I mean is *inside* I am."

"Inside is biology OK? Inside you're male. You might for what ever reason *wish* to be female but..."

"You heard about what they did at Dr. Holman's Laboratory."

"Is *that* what this is all about? Son it could be decades- if *ever* before that technology is applied to humans."

"No Dad. Maybe your generation was stuck with whatever natural accident happened but that's history now OK? You always said Science could make the impossible ordinary..."

"You're a bright young man Charles. Com'on puberty is starting. Your beard will start to grow and... you know. It'll never work."

“Sure Dad. I’m frigg’n seventeen years old. Duh! It ain’t going to happen. Now or never. I’m not like other boys and you know it.”

His dad leaned forward in his chair, “Are you saying you want to dress like that twenty-four seven?” Charlie nodded. Harmon rolled his eyes. “You can’t go to school like that, they wouldn’t allow it.”

“They? Com’on Dad it’s the *University* High School. They’ll listen to you.”

“Not likely and even if they did Charles have you given any thought to how the other kids would respond?” Charlie just sat there. “Trust me, they’d make your life a living hell.”

“Like you have any idea of how they treat me now? Cocksucker, that’s what the guys call me. Not all the guy, all the time but if it isn’t that its fag, shrimp...” His eyes brightened as tears bloomed. “And... and the girls...” He rolled his eyes. “They treat me like I’m a bag of slime, dirt under their nails.”

Harmon was appalled. “You never even hinted that it was like that.” His heart went out to his son. How could he been so blind not to see any of this before? “But going to school like that.” He nodded toward his son, “It’ll only make things worse.”

“I’ll drop out of school then.”

“Huh!”

“Seriously Dad you know I know more than my teachers. The whole thing’s a... joke.”

Dr. Harmon Watson quivered with rage, “I know no such thing Charles. You’re intelligent, brilliant even but there’s so much you need to learn...”

“To be a scientist like you Dad?” Charlie leaped up, his eyes bright with tears and his normally pale flesh now glowing crimson, “They call me a cocksucker OK. Well I’ll suck their cocks but they’ll be begging me to do it. And the girls will eat their heart out and die of pure envy. I don’t need a PhD to do that.” And with that he flounced from his father’s study.

Dr. Watson sat there in shock. He’d seen none of this coming. When Charles’ mother had died... His thoughts froze as the repressed grief swept over him and then triggered other memories. With a shock he realized that the dress that Charles had been wearing was... no that couldn’t be correct- he’d gotten rid of all her things right? But that *had* been her dress he realized with sick despair. Had his son retrieved all of her things? Had the sudden loss of a mother forever twisted... He snapped into action. Turning he picked up the phone on his desk.

“Gordon? Sorry I know that it’s late but... it’s about my son.”



He was a dead man, of that he was sure. Darwin P. Hornsblyth, age twenty-nine years and just months away from earning his Ph.D. he mused. Would people come to his funeral and say ‘Ah- so much potential wasted’? His poor mother and father, they’d be devastated of course. He shook his head in an attempt to break the spell of self-pity. The DNA print-

out caught his eye once more. He stared at the sheet as if hidden upon its complexity was some kind of reprieve.

The little son-of-a-bitch had lied. There was no sign of his y chromosome. It was gone, utterly erased. So much for saying that the y chromosome didn't matter, apparently it had mattered to Charlie. He laughed. It was a sour, nasty sound that hung in the stillness of the laboratory. If *only* the missing chromosome were the only issue he could have lived with that. Genetically castrated wasn't death. Parts of the x chromosome were missing and only God knew what that meant. No less than six other chromosomes were altered, several extensively. He could be dead in hours for all he knew.

He stood up, his hands thrust deeply into his pockets and then he began to pace. Maybe he was over reacting? He was tired and his head still throbbed but otherwise... A single missing enzyme, a critical component in say a neurotransmitter and this carefully crafted biological system would come apart at the seams. A massive heart attack, a terminal seizure, oh the possibilities were endless. He stopped and picked up the phone. Fuck the hour, fuck the fact that Dr. Holman was surely asleep, a moment and then another passed and finally the phone was picked up. "Dr. Holman there's been a terrible accident in the laboratory."

~oOo~

Dr. Robert Holman looked ruffled and bleary-eyed as if he'd been called suddenly from his bed in the middle of the night, which he had. But he was not one to suffer alone. Before driving over to the hospital he'd called his senior post doc and within an hour every single graduate student in his extensive laboratory complex had arrived to share the *long watch*. It was to this captive audience that Dr. Holman played his Hamlet.

Whatever grief he felt regarding Mr. Hornsblyth's trauma, and it was surely slight at best, what an opportunity this was proving to be to both inspire these future scientists with the truly heroic and sometimes dangerous task of expanding the horizons of man's knowledge while emphasizing the imperative of care in the execution of ones duties. The picture he painted for his breathless audience both raised Darwin up as a scientific martyr while simultaneously reproving him for his lack of proper care. "Accidents don't just happen he concluded."

"Ah- Dr. Holman could I see you for a brief consultation."

Dr. Holman turned his back on his audience, "Yes of course. Excuse me." He followed the intern down the hall to a room just outside the Intensive Care Unit where Darwin Hornsblyth was lying. "Yes doctor? You have something new?" Even as he said this he peeked through the window. For all he knew Darwin was already dead.

As if reading his mind the intern responded, "His vital signs are still good. He's asleep."

At that Dr. Holman turned away from the window to give the young University doctor his full attention, "And?"

"You wanted to see this I believe."

Dr. Holman snatched at the sheet. It was another DNA analysis, the third tonight. "It keeps changing."

"And this latest change is as obvious as the nose on my face." The young man drew next to Dr. Holman so as to point out with his finger the most startling alteration in the latest data. "See no longer a Turner syndrome hmmm."

"A second x chromosome? How is that possible?"

"Sorry Dr. Holman that's more your area of expertise than mine."

"Right." He said and then shrugged. The additional x chromosome was no mere copy of the original that was for sure. Where in hell had the extra genetic material come from? "What's this?"

The doctor winced. "I was hoping you might know." Even smaller than a y-chromosome it had a distinctive 'z' shape.

"Mitochondria DNA."

"What?"

"I'll bet anything that most if not all of this new material has migrated from nearby mitochondria. God only knows what information might be carried in those genes." He glanced at his watch. "Sorry doctor I got to go. Keep me informed if anything significant develops. Our work must go on hmmm?"

Chapter 2

"You can't wear a bra and that's final Charles." In response Charles just glared at his dad. "And take off the silly wig."

"My hair's a mess."

His dad groaned. "Like *anybody* would notice. That skirt is too short and... well, it's... obscene."

"A lot you know Dad everybody is wearing them like this."

Another groan, "Girls you mean. I'm sure none of the guys..."

"Don't go there again Dad. I'm going to be late for school."

"OK but you promised to go to Dr. Baker with me right after school."

"Of course Dad. It'll seem funny though seeing Uncle Gordon like *that*. I mean Dad, Gordon's a Psychologist."

"So?"

"You always laughed at psychologists: pseudoscience, mumbo-jumbo, table levitating, silly stuff."

"Well Gordy has known you since you were born Charles and if anyone might be able to help you I'd bet on him."

Just then Charlie did the unexpected. He leaped up, wrapped his arms around his Dad and, before Harmon could respond, gave him a quick kiss on the cheek. "Thanks Dad for everything."

In the next instant, Harmon was alone. His son, short skirt and all had rushed out the door. That neither the bra nor the wig had been removed was but two more symbols of the rapid retreat he'd been forced into. It was all too much to absorb in what? Ten hours? He checked his watch. The office at the high school should be open now and the people there would sure as hell need to be warned. He'd soon find out just how much clout he really had with the University. Hell, it wasn't like when the greenhouse was destroyed right?

~oOo~

To be *entirely* honest Mr. Hornsblyth..."

"I'd rather that you be *just* honest, OK?" Interrupted Darwin. His face was intolerably tight from the tension. The doctor laughed which didn't please Darwin at all but he said nothing more.

Very funny Mr. Hornsblyth. Now where was I? Oh yes, on the one hand you're driving the staff to distraction. Three MRI's in the last four hours and God only knows how many laboratory tests. But on the other hand, well a quarter of the staff is involved with this analysis and the other three-quarters would like to be."

"Glad to be so... interesting." Darwin responded in an icy voice.

The doctor was too full of himself to notice the young man's discomfort. "The MRI's reveals that your corpus callosum has shrunk almost twenty-five percent between the first and third test."

"And that's... good?"

"Oh heavens no." He blushed when he saw Darwin's reaction. "Those are the fibers connecting the two hemispheres of the brain. Reducing the size of the CC impairs the flow of information from one hemisphere to the other. Please let me finish. "Lets see, wisdom teeth in recession..."

"Recession?"

"Mr. Hornsblyth? Significant loss of calcium of the superior- Parietal bone juncture and... well too many specifics to list right now."

"And your point?" Growled Darwin.

"Oh- ah, you're getting younger."

"HUH!"

"It's truly the most *amazing* thing..."

"That I understand. What I want to know is what does it mean to me?"

The man's hands fluttered excitedly, "Middle to late teens."

"Meaning?"

“Best guess you’ll eventually have the mental and physical attributes of a teenager hmm. You know- loss of inhibitions, limited insight but boundless energy. Perhaps some radical mood swings, infatuations... the *usual*.”

“And that’s all?” Darwin felt a surge of relief. But it was premature.

“Other than the sex change, yes.”

Darwin groaned, his head in his hands. “How bad is it?”

“Is what?”

“Jesus!”

“Oh, the sex change.” The man shrugged. “Vagina, ovaries, loss of the prostate of course...”

“Vagina?”

“Sorry. I see that you find that distressing hmmm.”

“I... I still have- you know -my penis and external gonads.”

“Yes.” Agreed the doctor, “Most interesting.”

“I want out of here.” Bellowed Darwin.

“You should really re-consider...”

“What? I don’t think there is *anything* you can do for me and I’m damned tired of providing *amusement* for you people.”

The good doctor looked horrified. “Amusement? Heavens we only have your best interests at heart.” The good doctor was talking to an empty chair. “Most impulsive.” He muttered and then laughed at himself. “Just like a teenager.”



It was one thing to imagine what it would be like to walk up the broad concourse and enter the University High School through the main door a la fem but, much to his surprise, Charlie found the actual event to be way more neat. For one thing, normally he was but one insignificant ‘nobody’ amidst the throng. Even the guys that were so mean to him over the years usually had better things to do just before the morning bell rang, like watching the babes of course. Even the girls seemed to spend more time watching each other than watching the guys at least at the first of the day.

OK so his breasts were really rolled up socks inside the bra- they didn’t know that. In fact nobody seemed to recognize him. No giggles or taunts but lots of looks. Yeah looks. He didn’t have to stare the guys in the eye to see the hunger. Of course for a teenage male lust was a continuous fact of life. He licked his lips and felt the still shockingly exciting texture of lipstick. Of course his old man would’a had a fit had he come down to breakfast in full makeup but a quick stop at a restroom on the way to school and... well what Dad didn’t know wouldn’t hurt Charlie right? He consciously swayed his hips as he climbed the steps leading into the main entrance. He reached for the door only to have it pulled open for him. Charlie stumbled back in shock. Good God! It was Randy McCort- alpha

male and captain of the basketball team. Mentally Charlie froze. Physically he stood there blocking the doorway like a statue.

“Hey, new here huh? I mean like- *else* we’d be already dating. Randy’s the name, love’s my game.” He said sticking out his hand as a too sweet to be refused grin swept across his handsome face and exposed perfect teeth. A hint of mint was on his breath, the air was heavy with the smell of cologne and there was something else, a natural musky, male odor that Charlie had never noticed before or at least he had never properly appreciated.

Brain freeze. Charlie struggled not to lose it here and now as he continued to look up and up and up. Yesterday he’d been a short runt and now, in a dress he was... delightfully *petite*. His hand was lost in Randy’s light but firm, warm grip. “Ah- Hi.” He gushed. Charlie could feel the idiotic, shit eating grin slowly spreading across his face, the hot bloom of *pleasant* embarrassment creeping up his neck and settling into his cheeks but as to any other reaction, he was on auto pilot. That Randy ‘Hunk’ McCort was coming on to him had smashed the connection between his frontal cortex and his motor system.

Of course the bell had to ring precisely at one of the sweetest moments in Charlie’s life. In an instant both were swept away and separated as the crowd of students pushed inside. Charlie was whirled down the hall by the press of the crowd but fortunately toward his home room without, it seemed, touching the ground. Randy, heads and shoulders above most, now stood like a rock against the tide and waited for *her* to look back and Charlie did. That Randy waved *to her* and looked overjoyed at the opportunity to do so... well if the rest of the day turned to shit it would still be the best day Charlie had ever known. His old man had been dead wrong- as usual.



Mako was all of six three and probably two hundred plus pounds. So much for the stereotype of the small Japanese male. As the senior post-doc in Dr. Holman’s laboratory he was also number two in the pecking order. As the scientific straw boss, overseer or more typically the old man’s slave driver he wasn’t terribly popular especially among the doctoral students like Darwin. His abrupt appearance in the hospital hallway in front of Darwin couldn’t have been an accident nor did it suggest anything positive. Darwin pulled to a halt as the hulking figure deliberately block his passage. “Mako-san.” Darwin said in mock respect.

The man normally had no sense of humor and today was no exception. “Where are you going Mr. Hornsblyth?”

Darwin twisted about as if to examine his own backside. “Nope, not there.”

“What?” Queried the somber face Asian.

“Just checking to see if I had grown a tail.” He laughed and then his face clouded over, “Jesus Mako-san they’ve been treating me like a lab rat ever since I got here.” When the hulk in front of him didn’t respond Darwin continued, “I’m out of here.” As he attempted to step around Dr. Mako Yama a heavy hand descended onto his shoulder.

“Not so fast Mr. Hornsblyth.”