

Caught Take-1: Blonde

Mom has some really nice stuff. Fancy dresses, skirts that fall just shy of the knee, satin blouses, high heels with pointy toes, and all the lingerie you can imagine—silk slips and satin camisoles, strapless bras and tight half-girdles, firm control body briefers, spandex pantyhose, steel-boned corsets with garters.

Shit, I know more about that kind of stuff than she does.

Makeup too. I study it online, watch the videos on youtube and practice nearly every time she's out of the house. I'm good enough to fool the pizza guy. Sure, he's not

the brightest bulb on the block, but he is a guy.

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So Mom goes off on an overnight trip, right? And I've been growing my hair long... And I've been dying to try that Elnett Satin hairspray she often wears. It's just so amazingly... womanly.

You see where this is going?

Mom thinks I'm in the swim club at school. It isn't true, but it does let me keep my body shaved (legs, chest, pits and so on). It really is for speed, of course. Dressing up as a woman is way faster.

I wash up and fix my face. That's how I think of it; fixing what's wrong with my face. Get rid of the boy bits and make the rest pretty. A warm beige foundation, contoured to bring out my cheeks, then



dusting powder and blush, and finally the big guns: dark eyeliner and bronzy eye shadow, soft black mascara and cranberry lipstick. That's my favorite part. I love the way my eyes get all big and round, but that moment when my mouth makes the leap to womanhood—when it gets all red and juicy—that's when I start thinking I really *am* a woman.

I brush my hair—one hundred times, like they say you should. It's soft and so light to the touch. I already look a lot like Mom. Sure, I'm a lot younger, but she looks pretty good for her age.

Man, she'd freak if she knew what I was doing. I frown at the mirror. "Oh my goodness, young man," I intone, "what on earth are you doing?"

I giggle. I'm such a girl.

I put on her black brassiere, the one that closes in the front, and stuff the cups with rolled-up socks. Sheer control-top pantyhose, beige, with reinforced toes and a cotton gusset. A black slip with lace trim and a plunging neckline. Silver sling-backs with peek-a-boo toes and three-and-a-half-inch heels.

And finally, my (and Mom's) favorite little black dress—velvet, with long sleeves, and a loose hem that doesn't quite reach my knees. It feels *so* soft.

At long last, I lean back and mist my hair. God bless whoever the hell invented this stuff. The scent reminds me of when I was little, watching Mom get ready for an evening out. I envied her for her beauty, her confidence, the way she could use all those simple tools to create something so...

I grope for the right word... so *powerful*.

I brush out my hair, first to define the part, then to pull it back away from my face, and finally from the underside to give it volume. It's done.

I'm a woman.

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The door slams. "Sidney, are you home?"

Oh, shit, it's Mom! What's she doing *here*?

Her footsteps click up the stairs and down the hall. "Don't come in," I yell. "I'm changing!"

How long would it take to kick off those shoes, tear off her little black dress, and put all that lingerie back in the drawers? I consider it, but one glance at the girl in the mirror stops me. It's too late.

"You're changing? In *my* bedroom?" The door pops open and there she stands. Her eyes go all big.

Staring at the floor, I turn to face her. She's wearing her black pumps with the blunt toes and low heels. All I can think of is that mine are prettier.

"Excuse me, young lady," Mom says, swirling into the room. "You better have a darn good reason for being in *my* house, wearing *my* clothes. And what on earth have you done with my son?"

Could that be an out? "He's, uh... not here," I say lamely. "He's over at Tommy's house."

"I see. And who might *you* be?"

What do I have to lose? "I'm a friend of his," I say softly. "I'm his girlfriend." My heart sinks even as I say it. She'll never believe *that*.

"His girlfriend? *My* Sidney?" She shakes her head. "I didn't know he even liked girls."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Hawthorne. About your clothes, I mean. I didn't think—"

"You didn't think I'd be home tonight? I guess not!" She sits on the bed. "My conference was cancelled. I've been driving for hours." Then, incredibly, she smiles. "At ease, dear. It's okay. I'm not mad. And they do look nice on you. Especially the shoes."

I thank her, but I'm wondering when I'll ever get the chance to remove the aforementioned shoes and go back to being plain old Sidney.

"It's strange, isn't it? My son leaves you here and goes off with his buddies." She pats the bed next to her. I sit down. "A normal boy would do it the other way round—especially with a girl as pretty as you. Don't you mind?"

"He didn't... I mean... he's a nice guy."

"He is nice. He's just not normal."

Well, I can't exactly deny *that*, can I? I'm wearing a bra, pantyhose and a black cocktail dress—not exactly standard issue for your average teenage guy. In the mirror, I look like Mom's sister.

She pats my hair. "What's your name, sweetie?"

I think fast. "Um... Cindy."

"Are you sure?" She grins. "I'm just teasing. It's a nice name. I bet your mother calls you Cynthia."

"Uh, sure. But only when she's mad at me."

"Well, Cindy... I'm not mad at you."

Yeah, sure... If being caught dressed up in your mother's clothes isn't trouble, then what the hell is? She sighs. "I guess it's just us girls now. How about we grab a bite to eat? My treat."

You get the picture? All of a sudden Mom and I are best buds. I guess she's thrilled that her son's finally dating a girl. Well, color me thrilled to *be* that girl.

Of course, Sidney doesn't come home the next day. I figure Mom's gotta be wondering about that, and about why Cindy is still here, but she goes right on treating me like a girl. And that's when it hits me.

She knew all along. ■

