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The Shaper: Her Daughter

by Amanda Hawkins

The tall woman who had rung my doorbell was certainly a looker, wrapped in a black leather coat and sporting a thick mane of smooth blonde hair that her fur collar couldn't quite contain. She handed me a business card that read: *Soloma Grundy, Shaper*.

I shook my head. "What do you—?"

She brushed past me, already unbuttoning her coat. "Nice place. You own it?"

"My parents do. What are—?"

"Bring that in." A large suitcase occupied my front porch.

"Just a minute, you can't—"

"I said—Bring. It. In." She glared at me with icy blue eyes.

All of a sudden I couldn't think straight. Against my better judgement, I hauled her suitcase inside. "Just until we get this—"

"Hang this up." She handed me her coat. Underneath, she wore a black sheath dress that exposed most of her thighs. Stiletto heels staccatoed on hardwood as she paced through my living room, kitchen, hallway and back to the front door. She demanded the location of the bathroom.

"There's a powder room under the stairs. Listen, lady, you—"

"Call me Ms. Grundy. A powder room, how quaint." Her smile was every bit as cold as her eyes. "I've never heard a man use that phrase. Come with me." She started for the staircase. I moved to stop her, but she hit me with those x-ray eyes and I froze. "Bring that with you." She nodded toward her suitcase.

I watched her climb the stairs, and listened to her step from one door to the next, bypassing bedroom and home office before locating the bathroom. The light clicked on, but the door didn't close. I stared at her suitcase. Disappointing this woman seemed like a very bad idea.

Hauling it upstairs, the damn thing felt like it was stuffed with—if not bricks then the next best thing. And the tiny wheels weren't much help. By the time I caught up to Ms. Grundy, I was sweating.

"Not exactly He-Man, are you. Still, it makes my job easier." In one smooth motion she lifted the suitcase and set it on the counter. It was filled with a lot of stuff I couldn't identify—neatly folded clothing, various boxes, plastic tubes and metallic objects—topped off with a large garment bag. "Don't just stand there," she snapped. "Get your clothes off. Or would you rather I did it for you?"

I stared at her, my mouth open. I felt like such an idiot. The woman must be a prostitute. “You better leave,” I mumbled, backing into the hallway. “I’m not into that sort of thing.”

“*Stop.*” She said it with the full force of authority, so I did. Then she grabbed the front of my shirt with both hands and ripped it apart, as easily as opening a book. Buttons flew in all directions.

I twisted in her grasp, my arms trapped in the sleeves. She told me to keep still, but this had gone too far. I spun around and my shirt tore away. With my hands free, I imagined myself slamming her into a headlock and dragging her out the front door, followed moments later by her stupid suitcase, with its mysterious contents spilling down the steps. But it didn’t work out that way. Instead, my hands were forcibly crossed at the wrists and held between four slim fingers and a thumb that could pass for carbon steel. Shit, she was *strong!*

“Next time, do as you’re told.” She lifted my arms up and away from my body, which hurt like hell. I bent forward and she did the same, her thick hair billowing like smoke. Her free hand tore at my jeans, popping the button and destroying the zipper. My pants fell and she ripped the boxers off my body like they were made of kleenex.

“Please—” I gasped. “It hurts—”

She lowered my arms half an inch. “Lift your foot,” she ordered, and when I did she plucked off my socks, one at a time. I was naked.

She let go and straightened up, tossing her hair over her shoulder in the kind of fluid motion you only see in shampoo commercials on TV. “Let’s get to work, shall we.” It wasn’t a question. She turned to her suitcase.

I didn’t wait to see what she had in mind. I took off and almost made it to the top of the stairs before she caught up. Damn, the woman was *fast* too!

Ms. Grundy slammed me into a headlock and dragged me back to the bathroom. “I see you’ve chosen the hard way,” she said dryly. “Pity. We could’ve had fun. Still, this will be fun too. Just not so much for you.”

She pushed me into the bathtub, where I stood facing the wall. A cool spray hit my back. It worked its way up and down, covering back and buttocks with some kind of foam that tingled. Then she soaked the back of my head.

“I know what you’re thinking. Why the hair on top?” She worked the foam into my scalp with a gloved hand. “It’s better to start from scratch. No funny kinks at the ends, just a nice gentle curl.” She spun me around and applied the spray again, top to bottom. I closed my eyes just before she hit me in the face.

I stood there for a long time, dripping with the stuff, while she sorted through her belongings. Finally, she turned on the shower and let me clean up. When I was finally able to open my eyes, the tub was full of loose hair and I was smooth from the neck down, not to mention bald on top and clean-shaven.

I felt like crying. How could I possibly explain this to anyone?

She threw me a towel and I thought again about escaping. Being naked was a drawback; maybe I could take the towel with me. Fast as she was, I should be able to shove her into the tub, close the door and make it outside before she could catch up. It might be my only chance.

Working with the towel, I maneuvered myself toward the door. My chance came when she turned to hang some lingerie on the towel rack. I pushed her hard in the back and bounced through the open door. I grabbed the knob and pulled, but it just wouldn't close—and then steely fingers were digging into my shoulder.

"It's not a good idea to piss me off," Ms. Grundy said flatly.

She picked up several metallic objects and dragged me into the hallway. Without letting go of my arm, she jumped up to slam a thick spike into the wall—in one smooth, unstoppable motion that illustrated exactly what I was up against. A second spike slammed into the opposite wall. Between the two she hung what looked like a shower rod, with overlapping halves that telescoped outward.

I couldn't believe the damage she was doing. "What the hell—?"

"This is what happens when you don't play ball." A moment later I was on the floor and she was wrapping my ankles in black-leather shackles. A pair of heavy hooks clipped to the shackles, on either side of each ankle—and then I was upside down, hanging from the pole like a piece of meat.

Did I mention how strong she was? To get the hooks over the bar, Ms. Grundy had to lift me with one hand while doing a chin-up with the other. She did it easily.

After a half-hearted attempt to reach the shackles, I gave up and let my arms dangle. I was high enough that they didn't reach the floor. Belatedly, I decided that picking a condo with vaulted ceilings was a mistake.

Ms. Grundy stepped into the bathroom, washed her hands and tidied her hair. When she came back she was wearing surgical gloves. "You needn't be afraid," she said briskly. "I've done this before, many times. You may not enjoy the process, but you will survive."

She knelt beside me. "I am a Shaper. You probably don't know what that is. It is simply that I have a special talent for shaping. Some people shape clay into new forms. Some people shape images or words. I shape people."

She laid her hands on my body. I screamed—or tried to—but the sound died in my throat. I tried to twist away, but a strange paralysis crept through my body. It wasn't that I couldn't move, for some reason I just didn't *want* to. It was a state of utter relaxation, like coming out of anesthesia. That wasn't the bad part. Whatever else Ms. Grundy was doing to me—that's what really hurt.

She kneaded my stomach and the little pot belly I'd been growing melted away like butter in a frying pan. Where the fat was going—the *weight*—I had no idea. She passed her hands about my waist and I swear I could feel it shrink. A jolt of pain surged through my torso; that might have been two of my ribs disappearing.

It was all impossible. It's one thing for a woman to be freakishly strong, and faster than she has any right to be, but to *change* me this? Was she a witch? Was she a creature from outer space, applying technology so far ahead of our own that it might as well be magic? What the hell was she *doing*?

She rubbed her hands over my hips. I felt them expand. She did the same thing to my legs. I found myself yanked a few inches farther away from the floor. She took my arm by the wrist, running her hand up and down both sides. Skin smoothed and flesh shrank. Maybe she was turning me into a little kid.

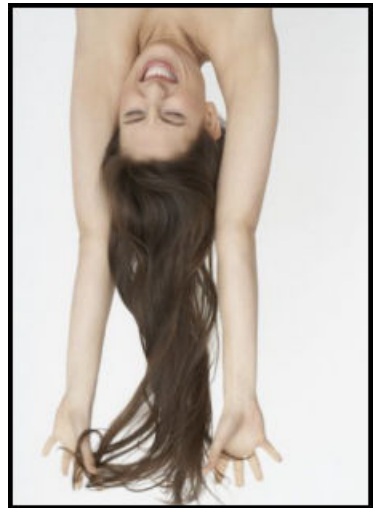
She touched my face, like a Vulcan performing a mind-meld. Her hair swung close enough for me to catch the scent: delicate, like a short-lived flower. Then she dug her thumbs into my cheeks, pushing them up toward my eyes. Muscles shifted as she prodded here and there, resized my eye sockets, smoothed my forehead and reshaped my mouth.

“Almost done,” she murmured, with only a hint of irony. “Hang in there.”

She made a bowl of her hands, cupped the top of my head, then gently pulled down on the skin. She did this repeatedly, her strokes lengthening, like she was pulling taffy. My scalp tingled. It felt hot and prickly. It itched like crazy.

I could feel something growing there, thickening, getting heavier with each passing moment, and I soon realized that she was creating a whole new head of hair. And by the exaggerated motions of her arms, there had to be a lot of it.

What she was really after became apparent when she turned her attention to the terrain between my legs. It was my manhood she wanted, such as it was, and I was helpless to stop her.



Ms. Grundy worked hard, digging her fingers in and forcing bits of my anatomy inside out and into places they shouldn't have been able to go. She kneaded the skin like clay and even the bones of my pelvis shifted in response. She made a hole and forced her hand inside, pushing the flesh this way and that, making space for what I dared not imagine. All I could do was hang there and hurt.

Her hand made a sucking sound as it pulled out. "All done," she announced as she removed her gloves. "You're female."

The pain faded and I found I could move again. In wonderment, I twisted long soft hair between my hands. Female? It didn't make sense.

A moment later she was back, touching my chest with claw-like fingers. "What would you like, a nice C-cup or a couple of double-Ds?"

I had no idea what she was talking about.

She studied me and shook her head. "Nope, you haven't got the frame for the big ones. You'll have to make do with a pair like mine."

An instant later the pain was back, slamming into my chest like a pair of railroad spikes. I still couldn't make a sound, like I was trying to choke down my own Adam's apple. I grabbed and twisted the hair on my head, which distracted me just long enough to avoid bursting into tears.

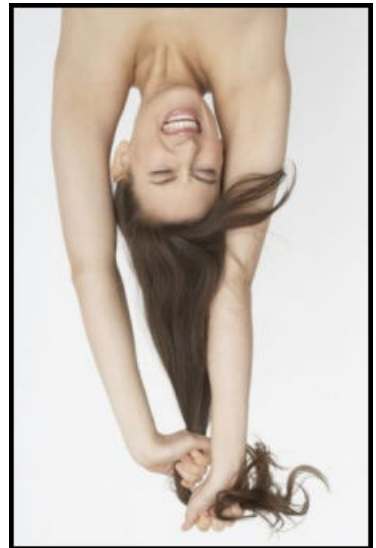
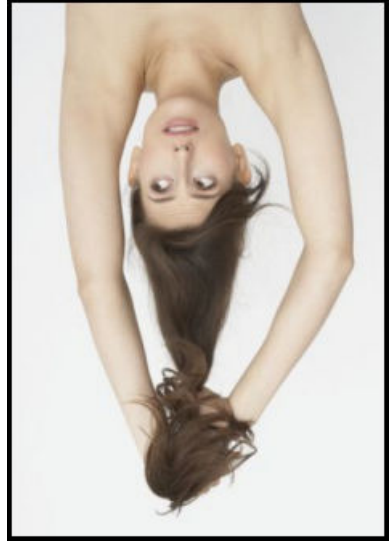
The pain faded when she released her death-grip on my brand-new pair of female breasts. I stared up at the enlarged nipples, proof that what she was really true: I was a woman.

She returned me to the floor, gently this time. I sprawled there, long hair spilling across my shoulders, and looked up with wide eyes. "Is it over?" Shocked, I touched my lips.

Ms. Grundy laughed. "Mid-range soprano, a nice feminine lilt, not too shrill. It suits you."

I sat up. "I sound like a girl."

"Of course you do. See those boobs? You *are* a girl."



My breasts felt firm to the touch and the tips responded like goose bumps on steroids. “But I’m not supposed to...”

She shrugged. “Who’s *supposed* to be anything? Go where life takes you.” She took me by the arm. “On your feet. It’s time to get dressed.”

The bathroom mirror showed two women standing side-by-side: a blonde goddess and, well... me. I touched my face with dainty fingertips. How was this possible? I might be a bit plain, but I was definitely a girl. “What have you done to me?” My voice actually sounded a lot like my mother’s.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves. I’m not done yet.” Ms. Grundy stood with her back to the mirror, studying me with a practiced eye. “Now that you’re the right way up...” She pulled me closer. “You need more color.” She passed her hands over my face, neck and shoulders, then across my chest and on down—therapeutic touch for the newly transgendered. I didn’t resist; it was too late for that.

Before my eyes, the girl in the mirror became visibly more tanned.

“A bit more body.” Ms. Grundy ran her fingers through my hair, which billowed softly and thickened. “As for your face...” She chewed her lip. “The cheeks need more.” She cupped my face and dug in her thumbs, smoothing the skin on either side of my nose upward and outward. She carefully adjusted my eyebrows, smoothed the contours of my jaw, and sculpted the skin around my mouth to plump up my lips. She lined my eyes with a fingernail and told me that I’d never need to buy liner again. Not that I ever had before.

The girl in the mirror shook her head and proceeded to finger-comb her tangled tresses. It seemed like the right thing to do. With her hair in place, all I could do was stare, astonished. She, me, or whoever—the woman was stunning.

Ms. Grundy was an artist, I realized, and a damn good one. Right up there with Rembrandt, Renoir and the Digital Blasphemy guy.

She smiled. “It is a rather nice look. Feminine, but with a solid air of strength. Sexy, but the classy kind of sexy. It’s right up there with my best work. You’re a lucky lady.”



Lucky? I took a step back. “Why did you do this?”

She laughed. “Why does one do anything? I’m a Shaper. It’s what I do.”

“But why *me*?”

“Why not you? Maybe somebody thought you’d be better off this way.”

She was insane. That had to be it. She was a crazy witch who ran around turning men into women. It was probably a random thing, like being struck by lightning. Although... I thought about it. Can witches read internet caches even if the files have been deleted? Could that be why she picked *me*?

I wondered what the gang at Femur’s would say if they could see me now.

Ms. Grundy handed me a pair of dark-blue panties and sat me (lid down) on the john. “I’ll finish your face the old-fashioned way,” she said, opening a makeup kit. “Pay attention to how it’s done.” As she applied each item—from foundation and dusting powder, eye shadow and mascara, lip liner and lipstick—I realized how easy it would be to do myself. That’s when I knew she was shaping my mind as well as my body, and there wasn’t a damn thing I could do about it.

Admiring the result, I surprised myself by thanking her.

“You’re quite welcome,” she said, hiding a smile.

“I mean it. It’s weird, but I feel stronger now. More confident.”

“Of course you do. That’s how a beautiful woman should feel.”

I tilted my head. Soft hair swirled from one shoulder to the other. “But—is this, er, for good? My family won’t even recognize me. My parents—”

She sighed. “You worry too much. Who do you think arranged all this?”

“What—my parents? You mean they know—”

“Your mother did. How could she not? She’s the one who dressed you up as a girl for the first time, way back when. Right?”

“I remember...” A cold shiver crept down my arms, raising goose bumps. “I was six years old, in first grade. It was Halloween. She made me wear a pink dress, a long blonde wig, makeup. She turned me into a little girl and paraded me around the neighborhood.” In my new voice it sounded like a confession; mother finally owning up to what she did.

Ms. Grundy looked amused. “Maybe she wanted to do it again.”

I crossed my arms and shook my head. The flutter of soft hair on bare skin was the caress I’d never received from a lover. “I’ve never forgotten how that felt.”

“That’s usually how it starts.” She began repacking her makeup.

I looked at her, confused. “How what starts?”

“What do you think? The cross-dressing. The interest in all things transgender. All that dreaming about how wonderful it would be if only you were a girl.”

I looked away. “But I don’t—”

“Oh, give it a rest. I know you’ve been denying it your whole life, but you’re a woman now. It’s what you always wanted. Just admit it.”

“It’s true... this is *me*.” My hands fluttered upward, like smoke from a campfire, then returned to explore the flesh of my chest. I gazed down in wonder at the delicate fingers with their manicured tips; at the warm flesh that turned my chest into a rift valley; at the swaying tresses that framed the whole world with brunette curtains. I licked my lips and tasted womanhood.

I was handed a basque and told to put it on. I did so, because it’s the kind of thing women are supposed to wear. It matched my panties, which I found pleasing. That was followed by a pair of black stockings, which I hitched to garters on the basque. As I slid each item into place it became more familiar, as if it were something I’d worn before—as if it were something I *should* wear. Women’s clothes, I realized, were no longer forbidden. It wasn’t cross-dressing anymore.

Ms. Grundy picked up a hairbrush. “You have your mother to thank for all this. She hired me, told your father, found a lawyer, broke the news to everyone else.”

The tugging in my hair brought me back to reality. “What are you saying? Does everyone know about... me?”

“Of course. She even told your boss to expect the ‘new you’ at work.”

Hair spray cooled my shoulders and I felt her tease the gentle curls that fluttered across my upper back. “What’s the lawyer for?”

She laughed. “Did you expect me to wiggle my nose and make it so you’ve been female your whole life? That’s not how it works. There’s all kinds of legal stuff to do, like changing your name, updating your records.”

“Then I’m a real woman?”

“As soon as you sign on the dotted line. You’ll be a real woman with a birth certificate, a commerce degree and a career in advertising. A real woman with family and friends, a nice car and a cat named Fluffy.”

I grimaced. “That was kind of a joke...”

“Well, it fits.” She picked up a digital camera. “C’mon, it’s picture time.”



Ms. Grundy draped a satin sheet over the armchair in my bedroom and got me to lie in front of it. I asked her why.

“It’s for my webpage. Try to look sexy.” She snapped several different angles. “I could even post a before-and-after, if you’ve got a recent pic of your old self that you wouldn’t mind sharing.” I shrugged. Why not?

She checked the time. “We’d better get moving.” She began laying out fresh underwear on the bed: a black spandex corset, heavily boned and strapless, with laces up the back and a matching pair of French-cut panties.

I pointed out that I was already wearing lingerie. “It’s for this outfit,” she said, lifting the garment bag from her suitcase. Out slid a full-length black dress.

I stared at the spectacular gown. “You want me to wear *that*?”

From behind me, an echo of my own voice: “Of course I do, dear. After all, I went to the trouble of picking it out myself.”

Mother? Oh, God. I felt like a little boy again, caught in mother’s makeup and her best wig. That actually happened to me back in grade six, and what an ugly scene it was. I backed away, clutching my chest. “What are you doing here?”

“She’s lovely, Soloma. Thank you.” A wad of bills passed from one woman to the other and vanished into Ms. Grundy’s cleavage.

“I don’t believe it—you *paid* her to do this?”

“A small price to pay,” Mother said grimly, “for a daughter I can be proud of.”

I looked at the floor. So that’s what it boiled down to. I never measured up as her son, so she turned me into her daughter. To be honest, I wasn’t even surprised. I never believed in myself, so why should she?

Mother looked me over. “Her complexion is a bit light.”

“Still working on it.” Ms. Grundy pointed to the bed. “Get moving.”

Meekly, I did as I was told. With my back turned, I removed the basque and switched to the fresh pair of panties. The stockings stayed and hooked into garters on the black corset. Mother made me lie face-down on the floor and Ms. Grundy stood on my back to pull the laces tight. Breathing was hard work after that, but the firm grip on my breasts actually felt good.

Ms. Grundy ran her fingers over my head and down my arms. My skin crawled. I was nothing more than clay to her, an object to be shaped as required. But what could I do? Clay gets no say in how it’s sculpted.

Mother handed me a long black petticoat. “It’ll give your skirt some life,” she said. I sat down and she helped me into the stiff underskirt, then the gown itself.

I noticed that she was wearing her best cocktail dress, one that I’d worn myself more than once. “I remember,” I told her.

“What’s that?” She worked the bodice of the gown up to where it covered my breasts.

Defiantly, I shook my hair back. “That Halloween. The way you turned me into a girl.”

She smiled and drew the zipper tight to the middle of my back.



“I’m so proud,” she said sweetly. “My little girl’s come a long way.”

“You wrecked my life,” I muttered, half-hoping she wouldn’t hear.

Mother frowned. “My daughter doesn’t seem to know how to act like a lady.”

Ms. Grundy stood before me, touched my face and closed her eyes. A surge of warmth grew within me, starting somewhere in (or on) my chest and spreading until it saturated my entire body. Unstoppable, it melted into my brain. My hands rose as if to push it away, but instead my fingers sank deep into my hair. I stood there for one long heart-stopping moment, head tipped back, lashes trembling, hands brimming with soft tresses...

I found myself thinking about what being a woman was all about. It had to be more than just long hair and firm breasts, high heels and fancy dresses, or even the new sex between my legs. It was about being strong and confident. It was about carrying myself with pride and dignity. It was about being a lady. And I wanted to be a lady.

“Hold that pose.” Mother stepped in front of me with a glass atomizer. “In the future, you should do this before getting dressed. Perfumes can stain.”

She misted the base of my throat and behind my ear lobes — “the pulse points,” she told me, “where the heat of your body carries your scent into the air. Now show me your arms.”

I let my hair drop and it spilled down my back like waves on warm sand. My wrists were perfumed, and the bend in each elbow. I was enveloped in the delicate scent of fresh lilacs.

“Your father is downstairs,” Mother said. “He doesn’t understand the choice you made. When you see him, take his hand, look him in the eye, and tell him how happy you are to be my daughter.”



The choice *I* made? I didn't remember choosing any of this, but I was a good girl and a dutiful daughter, and good girls don't make trouble.

Mother handed me a set of black-pearl jewelry: a choker necklace, earrings and a bracelet. "That should be enough, dear. We don't want you looking trashy."

I drew the pearls around my neck, lifting my hair to clear the clasp. The earrings were for pierced ears; which, I quickly discovered, mine were. Bending over was out of the question, so Ms. Grundy guided my feet into a pair of black pumps and strapped them around my ankles. My legs actually felt better in the tall heels.

Mother set to work behind me with a hairbrush, while Ms. Grundy administered the final programming. "You're a woman now. A woman's best accessory is her smile. Remember to smile." She matched her cadence to mother's brush-strokes. "Speak clearly. Keep your consonants crisp."

I stood quietly while they dressed my hair and touched up my face. I knew they were shaping my mind at the same time, but I no longer cared. In fact, I welcomed it. Ruby-red lips, lashes that could comb dust from the air, the feminine symmetry of my face—anything and everything to erase the man and emphasize the woman. In the end even my eyes held a female soul.

Ms. Grundy lifted my chin. "Remember this if nothing else: as a woman, you're ten times prettier than you think you are."

Then she vanished—into thin air or the next best thing—never to be seen again, and the sharp staccato of her heels receded into the distance like rainfall.

Mother escorted me to the top of the stairs. The noise hit me like dry heat: a babble of voices, scattered applause, even a few catcalls. "Your attention please," Mother called. "I'd like you to meet my lovely new daughter, Carmen."

I saw Father at the foot of the stairs, looking uncomfortable in his old tux, and behind him my sister, her husband, and my little brother in his grad suit. I saw friends from grade school, my date to the prom, some of the guys from work, and even my most recent (former) girlfriend. People were spilling out of the living room and down the hallway, while others were still arriving through the front door. My whole life was down there.

Mother gave me a little push. I lifted my long skirt and stepped down. My hair slid forward, drawing velvet curtains around my face, and just for a moment the crowd fell silent. I could hear the rustle of my gown, the sharp click of my heels on hardwood and the matching echo of mother's heels right behind mine.

Like mother, like daughter. At least I remembered to smile. ■
