

## Chapter 6: The Past

“After I get my shot,” you said to the leggy nurse, “you and I should get together for a drink.” You glance down at her name tag. “Elle. Pretty name.” Her loose-fitting nurse’s uniform does nothing to hide her curves.

She looks up at you, touches you on the arm, does an instant assessment, smiles. “Hand me your phone.”

You do, and she taps in her number, hands you your phone back. “Lie down,” she says. The Hive has converted the Javits Center into a massive inoculation center, rows upon rows of cots separated by sheets of plastic.

“What do I need to lie down for?”

“The shot will make you woozy,” the nurse says, picking up a hypodermic needle. It looks like a gun, and she points it in the air like a pistol. She smirks. “You might faint.”

“You don’t have to worry about that...” you start to say, sitting on the edge of the cot, as she presses the cold, metal barrel against your arm. There’s a “chunk” and you feel a pinch, and then the world spins and you fall over onto your side.

“By the way,” Elle says, her face now a shapeless blur as she lifts your head. You’re fading fast, but before you pass out, you hear her ask, “What shade of lipstick is that you’re wearing?”



Beep. Beep.  
Beep.

You're lost  
in a formless  
world of  
darkness.  
What  
happened?  
Where am I?  
Your last  
memory was  
being at the  
Javits Center,  
the cute nurse,  
the shot.

Beep. Beep.  
Beep.

For a  
second, you  
panic as you  
lock in on the  
electronic

beeping, thinking, my alarm. I'm gonna be late for work. It's not the sound of your alarm, though. It's steady. Slow. Almost calming, and now you hear another sound— a wheezing, aspirating... something sucking in, hissing out....

You feel someone touch your wrist, then push their hands under your legs. You open your eyes and find yourself looking up at a bland, generic corporate ceiling, but there's also a blonde not so generic woman there— pretty, nice tits. Fuckable. "You're not Elle," you manage, but your throat is dry, and your voice sounds wrong.

The blonde laughs. "Elle?" She says in a sweet, southern accent. "Is that your girlfriend?"

"Not yet," you say, and again, what's wrong with your voice. "Thirsty."

"Oh, let me get you some water," the nurse says, disappearing from your view.

You try to move and feel restraints tight around your wrists and ankles. You struggle, the bed rails shaking slightly.

"Don't struggle. That's just for your safety," the nurse says as she starts to raise the back of the bed, lifting your head and shoulders. "You were thrashing around like crazy during your chrysalis."

“Chrysalis?” Looking down, you see stick legs sticking out from the bottom of your pink hospital gown, tiny little feet in pink socks with lace trim. You blink, thinking, I’m hallucinating.

She holds the sippy cup to your lips, and you drink. The water is cool, and you clear your throat. “What happened?” You ask, wincing now as your voice still sounds high-pitched, soft, like when you were a child. “What’s wrong with my throat?”

“The counselor will be in shortly now that you’re awake, and she’ll explain the changes you’ve experienced.”

“Why can’t you tell me?” You demand, getting angry, but you sound shrill, weak. “What the hell happened to me?”

The nurse’s sweet demeanor changes. Her face grows hard. You’re not her first difficult patient. She looks at you now with cold eyes, but there’s a superior smile on her face. “The therapist will be here shortly.” she says with finality as she heads toward the door. “So, just calm down, Katherine.”

Katherine? You take it as some kind of insult. Who does this bitch think she is? “My name’s not Katherine,” you say.

“It is now,” the nurse says with a grin. “The therapist will explain.”

She leaves. You fight with the restraints. Looking at your arms, you see slender little pipe stems. Tiny hands. You look again at your scrawny legs, little feet. Those pink socks, like something a

little girl would wear. Your pink gown. What kind of weird ass nurse was she? What had happened to you?

Beep. Beep. Beep.

You lay back and close your eyes. Even your brief struggle against your restraints has left you feeling exhausted, weak. You drift in and out of sleep. You have no idea how long it's been before you snap awake as the door to your room opens and an older woman in a business suit, her hair streaked with gray, walks in holding a smart pad. "Miss Rose?" The woman says, her face blank, all business. "May I call you Katherine?"

Miss. She called you miss. It's a slap in the face. "My name isn't Katherine," you say, still wincing at the sound of your voice, which is higher than hers, much higher. "You can call me Mr. Rose."

"I am Sam Walters," the woman says as if she didn't hear you. "And I am here as your Hive appointed therapist to explain some of the exciting changes you'd experienced as well as to help you, let's say, adjust to Total Equality." She pats you on the hand, and you try to jerk it away, rattling your bed.

The Hive. The fucking Hive. "What the hell is going on?"

Sam makes a note on her smart pad. "Subject demonstrates unacceptable levels of aggression..."

"Unacceptable? What are you doing?"

“I’m just making a few notes on your case to determine if you will need to be sent to a *reprogramming facility* before returning to the general population, Miss Rose.” There’s a threat in her voice. You have no idea what a reprogramming facility might be, but you have no doubt you don’t want to go there.

‘Okay, okay,’ you say, trying to calm yourself. “I’m just a little confused and, uh, disturbed is all.”

“Of course, you are,” Sam says. She pats your hand again. This time you don’t recoil.

“Let’s have you take a look at yourself before we continue. It’ll help you achieve clarity.” She begins to undo your bindings. You glance at the door, wondering if you should make a break for it. The door is open. You want to get away from here, this insanity. Once your bindings are off, you rub your wrists, swinging your legs which come nowhere near racing the floor. Sitting up, you realize Sam is very tall, very big, especially for a woman.

She takes your elbow. “Let me help you down.”

“I can do it,” you say, hoping down off the bed. You immediately feel lightheaded, and you wobble, falling against Sam, who catches you, chuckling.

“You’re exceedingly frail,” Sam explains as she walks you toward a full-length mirror. “Delicate. It’s a side effect of the inoculation.”

You only come up to just below her shoulder, and you feel like a child walking with her, her arm around you, supporting you. As you approach the mirror, you almost faint again, your head reeling as you look at Sam standing next to what appears to be a child. “That’s not me,” you say, shaking your head as you reach a petite hand to your soft, smooth cheek.

Your face is not your face. You look like a girl, or maybe a kind of pretty boy, with a tiny, upturned nose, big, innocent eyes and plump, soft lips. Looking down from that face, you see a long, slender neck and then a skinny little body, tiny arms and legs, though there does seem to be a slight rounding to your hips. Your knees go weak as your brain struggles to process, to accept that this is you. “This isn’t possible,” you say, realizing your soft voice matches your pretty face. A hand drops and you feel your junk still there, but it offers little comfort. “This can’t be real.”





Sam steers you back toward your bed. “I have good news, Katherine. The changes you experienced during chrysalis have been shared by all men. You’re all small and frail now, pretty. So, what you just saw is the new normal.” She helps you climb back up on the bed and you sit, stunned.

“As for your name, The Hive strives to offer Total Equality. It wasn’t fair boys didn’t get to have names traditionally gendered female, so you have all been assigned new names that make you equal to women.” She fishes a small plastic card out of her pocket and hands it to you. It’s an official ID, recognizing you as a citizen of The Collective. Your new face is there, and the name Katherine Lindsay Rose. Next to sex it reads, B.

“B?” You say.

“As in boy,” Sam says, patting you on the knee. “You’re a perfectly healthy, normal little boy, Katherine. Now, let me explain a few other things about your exciting new life...”

You pretend to listen, but you keep looking at your tiny, soft little hands, your slender wrists. The only thing that really sinks in, and she mentions it four or five times, is that you will be sent for reprogramming unless you’re a good little boy and show The Hive you’re adjusting to your exciting new life.

The next day, the blonde nurse from the day before comes into your room carrying a box, all smiles. “Morning, cutie,” she says. “You get to go home today! Are you excited?”

You must have passed Sam’s test– so far. You shrug. “I guess,” you say as the nurse places the box next to you. You glance and see your old clothes, the ones you were wearing the day you went for your shot.

“Oh, don’t look so down, honey,” the nurse says, patting you on the cheek. “No one likes a sullen boy.”

You wonder if she’s baiting you, trying to get you to snap, get yourself committed.

“Show me that pretty smile,” she says.

You think about punching her, but instead you smile, hating yourself for it.

“Now, was that so hard?” The nurse says. “Look at that. You’re real pretty when you smile, Katherine. Hey, you know what’s funny? My name’s Katherine, too. Isn’t that a hoot?” She starts to leave. “Oh, and The Hive threw in a pair of shoes for you, since your old ones would never fit. Also, there’s makeup in the bathroom if you want to freshen up.” She pauses.

“Thanks,” you say, forcing another smile onto your face.

“Total Equality,” she says as she leaves.



None of your old clothes come even close to fitting. Your shirt hangs on you like a tent. You have to roll up your pant legs. The shoes they left for you are pink and white platform sneakers that read Princess on the side in sparkly letters.

Another test, you suppose, disgusted as you lace them up. Refuse the sneakers, and end up brainwashed. Maybe it would be better than knowing you were being feminized and humiliated like this, but you are thinking about running now, escaping, getting off the grid. You wished you done it sooner, when you were still– a real man, but even like you are now you feel certain you could live off the land somehow, maybe in a forest deep in the heart of Canada.

Dressed, you struggle to head out the door, but in the end you head to

the bathroom and start doing your makeup. You don't really have a choice, but the experience is different now as it forces you to look at your sweet, feminine features as you make them even more sweet and feminine. The colors are not Peachy Princess, which annoys you, but they are not completely wrong for your complexion.

