

EX-HUSBAND

Magazine
3

*Turn that cold,
distant ex into a...*



*Hopeless
Romantic*

*Favorite RomCom?
All of them, thanks.*

*Favorite hobby?
Planning his
wedding to the
guy he hasn't
even met.*

*Relationships are his
everything: tips, gossip,
friends, celebrities,
strangers, he can't
even!*

*Constantly
fantasizes
about the
way he
meets his
soulmate.*

*Falls in
love so
easily!*

*Lives for
flowers,
presents,
compliments
and kisses.*

Cooper, Kadee and Cheelin

While the closing credits of *Romeo and Juliet* rolled across the screen, Markus had cried himself out—he always felt better after a good cry. Once his crying spell ended, he decided to head off to bed. Then, he heard that same ghostly voice which had become so common place and it said, “The Wedding Planner.” Markus’ mouth dropped open. There was a romantic movie about a wedding planner? A movie which combined his two new obsessions—wedding and romance? He had to see it. Now.

He flipped on his TV, did a search. It was on The Romance Channel. He didn’t have a subscription, and it would cost 12 dollars. He shrugged. So what? He *needed* to see The Wedding Planner and would gladly pay 1000 dollars right now if that’s what it took. He subscribed, tapping in all his information, struggling with his long nails, tapping, tapping, heart racing...

Finally! He sat back as the movie started... The main character, Mary, was talking on her cellphone, when the heel of her Gucci shoe caught in a manhole cover. A dumpster barreled down a hill toward her. She got the shoe off, but she couldn’t just leave such her shoe behind to be ruined, so she ran back. She loved her shoes. Markus smiled and nodded, totally relating. *I totally get that. That’s like something I would do.* Then, he shook his head. *What am I thinking?*

The dumpster came closer, closer, and Mary just couldn’t let go of that shoe. Oh, no! Markus thought, eyes wide. She’s going to die!

Then, a really cute guy came bounding into the scene, pushing her to safety, and then landing on top of her, the two staring into each other’s eyes, obviously connecting, the guy lingering, so caring...

I want to meet cute, Markus thought as his heart raced. *I want it to be special when I meet the guy—I mean—girl, of my dreams. I wish I lived in a rom com!* He eagerly watched the rest of the movie, then when it ended, he once more cried and cried. Once the crying stopped, he sighed and bit his lip. “This has to stop,” he whispered. “I am becoming... I mean, it’s like I’m turning into my ex-wife with all this sappy romantic nonsense.”

He lay down to sleep, determined to be more of a man, but Ava and his sub-conscious had other ideas for him--

He dreamt he was walking along a busy street in San Francisco, talking on his cellphone, but why did his voice sound so high? “They’re going for



June. I know, I know... oohh!" He stumbled, looked down, his heel was stuck in a manhole cover, which is when he realized, "I'm Mary."

He felt it all, saw it all from her eyes. He loved his Gucci shoes. He couldn't just leave one behind. He found himself desperately pulling on it, the dumpster closing in, closer... closer... and then—oohh!-- he was on his back, staring up into Steve's dreamy eyes, their bodies pressing together...

Markus struggled to pull out of the dream. "Why am I Mary? Shouldn't I be Steve?" But, as soon as the scene faded, he once more found himself walking along perched on his heels, wearing a dress, chatting on his cellphone... "Oohh!" his heel got caught, and his heart raced with excitement because he knew a hunky guy was about to rescue him... the scene played over and over as the "meet cute" burned itself into Markus' brain.

Screech!

Markus sat up in shock, woken by the shrieking of his alarm clock. He felt his breasts sway and bounce. "Did I turn into Mary?" He wondered, and

when he reached up to touch his face, he scratched himself, having forgotten he had long nails now.

I've turned into Mary, he thought in a panic. I'm her now. He rolled out of bed and hurried to the bathroom mirror, his breasts jiggling with every step, and then uttered a half sigh of relief as he did not see Jennifer Lopez looking back at him, but his own smooth, feminized face. He was still him, or at least this new version of him. He cupped his breasts and squeezed. *I really need to do something about this.*

He would, he promised himself, but for now, he'd overslept, and he just had to get to work.

That day, he had trouble concentrating and messed up several orders. All day long he kept thinking about Chance and imagining different ways they might have met if they were in a romantic movie. Markus imagined himself in a burning house, crying, helpless, terrified, and then Chance, now a firefighter, burst through the door, cradled him in his arms and carried him to safety...

Markus smiled to himself as he imagined Chance cupping his chin, tilting his head back and...

"Omigod!" Markus gasped as he realized that Chance was standing right in front of him. Markus took a step back, blushing, shocked at what he'd been thinking and at the same time suddenly terrified of Chance.

"You get weirder every time I see you," Chance said, his eyes drifting down to Markus' perky breasts. *He may be weird, but he's got an awesome rack,* Chance thought. "Dude," he started to say, "your rack is..." Markus self-consciously wrapped his arms around his girls. Even though guys had been checking out his breasts ever since he'd popped them out, it still made him feel uncomfortable to be ogled, especially by a good-looking guy like Chance.

Chance, seeing Markus defensive reaction, thought better of commenting on the other man's mammaries. "I'll have the usual," he said, once more making eye contact with Markus.

"Coming right up," Markus said, turning and getting order ready. He giggled and wiggled while he worked. Okay, so, yeah, it wasn't super cool that

Chance had practically licked his tits with his eyes, but he was a guy. It was just how guys were, Markus told himself, deciding to forgive the other man. He loved cooking for Chance. It was a really good chance to show what a good wife he would...

Markus froze, not only because he realized he'd been thinking of himself as wife material, but because he noticed something he hadn't noticed before: a gold band on Chance's ring finger. A wedding band. "Y—you're married?" He sputtered as he put the food on the counter.

"What?" Chance said, then remembered he'd worn his ring today. "Oh, yeah. Meeting the wife later." He rolled his eyes. "She gets suspicious if I'm not wearing it. You know how insecure women are."

"But, you *are* always sleeping around."

"So? What guy doesn't sleep around on his wife, especially when she refuses to lose the baby weight, am I right?"

What a jerk! Markus thought, slitting his eyes in feminine fury. Chance's poor wife. "Have a good day, sir," he said, voice suddenly frigid.

Chance didn't seem to notice. He took his food and left.

Men! Markus thought, stomping one foot in a huff.

After Chance left, Markus saw a mother pushing a baby in a stroller. Overcome by a completely strange impulse, he left his truck and ran over to the mom, smiled and looked down at the baby, who smiled back at him and made a gurgling sound. "Oh! Look at that smile!" Markus gushed. "Your baby is so cute."

The Mom smiled back. "Thank you so much," she said.

Markus crouched down and admired the adorable baby with its little nose and pink skin. "I can't wait to have one of my own," he said.

"I'm sure you'll make a wonderful mother," the woman answered and then pushed her stroller along. "Bye."

A wonderful mother? Markus shook his head, not because he was totally shocked that he'd been mistaken for a woman, but because he *had* been fantasizing about becoming a mommy. *What the hell is wrong with me?*

“That’s it!” He said. “I’ve got to stop all this girly shit from infesting my brain. Tonight, I am recommitting to manliness.”

On his way home, Markus bought a bottle of 100 proof Kentucky Bourbon, and for dinner he made a steak and a baked potato. He put on Mixed Martial Arts, two of the best strikers in the world. Whiskey and men fighting. Yes, Markus thought, nodding as he sat down. This is just what I need to get back in touch with my manhood.

The guys circled, jabbing, kicking. Markus didn’t find himself focusing on the fight, though. *They look so cute in those little shorts*, Markus mused, admiring the men’s rock-hard asses, and *yummmm*, he thought, admiring the bulge in the front of their shorts, and their ripped abs and... and... one of the guys punched the other in the face and Markus gasped. “Don’t ruin that perfect nose!”

As he imagined what the guys looked like naked, visualizing what those bumps in their pants would look like were they exposed, he sipped some of the smoky, oaken bourbon and immediately spit it out, his mouth and throat burning even as he realized with horror that he’d been totally getting horny looking at the men on his screen, imagining their junk.

“Omigod!” He gasped. “Omigod!” He thought, terrified at the thought he might be turning gay. “I’m not gay. I’m not gay!” But, as soon as he glanced at the screen and saw the men, the bulges in their pants, he felt his nipples getting hard.

“New plan,” he decided, turning off the fight. *I’ll watch a guy movie and have some Chablis. No, he insisted to himself. It’s not girly at all. Men drink wine. It’s **not** just for girls. Chablis is for bros, not just hos.*

As he moved, his erect nipples kept rubbing against his shirt, sending alien tingling of feminine pleasure through his body. “Down! Stop!” He said, looking down at his breasts. They didn’t listen.

He decided to watch *Pirates of the Caribbean*. What could be more manly than pirates? Glass of wine in hand, he curled up on the couch and watched, soon rooting for Will Turner to finally find the courage to tell Elizabeth Swann how he felt. “They’d make such a good couple,” Markus whispered. “Omigod! They’re perfect for each other!”

Markus drifted off to sleep. He felt the wind whipping in his long hair, smelled the salty breeze, his dress swirling around his legs. His dress? He



looked down to see he was wearing the same dress the pirate had forced Elizabeth Swann to wear, and then he realized he was Elizabeth Swann,



and a captive on the Black Pearl! “Will!” He cried out, one slender arm across his forehead. “Save me!”

As Markus fantasized romantic moments with he and Orlando Bloom, Ava sculpted his body, first slendering his waist, making it as tiny as any girl could ever want and then making his hips spread and round into generous

birthing hips. She paused, giggling, examining his sexy new figure, loving the way his hip now thrust so prettily into the air.



Then, she took away his muscle, his arms and shoulders melting away while his frame shrank until Markus was now all soft, dramatic curves. As one final touch, Ava morphed his boxers into a pair of pretty pink panties.



Looking at him sleeping peacefully, imprisoned in his soft little body, Ava clapped. He was gorgeous, and he was going to hate it.

Markus found himself in a massive stone hall, lit with flickering torchlight that sent shadows dancing across the ancient walls. Scurvy swashbucklers, a sea of scars, eyepatches and missing teeth, packed the room. At the front of the hall, flanked by all the pirate queens and kings, waited Will Turner. Markus and Will's eyes met, and Markus, clutching a bouquet of roses smiled his prettiest smile, mouthing "I love you."

Will mouthed "I love you, too."

A discordant "Wedding March," scratched out on tuneless fiddles echoed across the hall, and---

SCREETCH.

Markus sat up. Morning. Rubbing his eyes, careful not to poke himself this time, he wiggled. His underwear was pinching his balls, and he looked down as he tugged on the soft fabric and then cried out as he realized he was wearing a pair of panties.

"What the hell is—" he froze, a hand going to his throat. The voice he'd heard was not his own. It sounded higher-pitched, breathy. It sounded like a woman, or a girl. "My voice?" Hearing that sweet, feminine sound come from his mouth made him cringe. He grabbed his phone and pushed *record*. "This is my voice," he said, then played it back. Hearing how he now sounded to the world was even worse. He sounded not just like a young woman, but he sounded cute. Like a cartoon girl.

"That's it," he said, getting up and heading to the bathroom for a shower. "I'm going to do something about this today." As he walked to the bathroom, something felt wrong, and it wasn't just the swaying of his bare breasts. His walk seemed—off. His butt felt swollen, and as he walked his arms bumped against his hips. What the hell? He couldn't understand, though when he glanced down he felt dizzy because it looked like his hips now rose from the sides of his body like gentle hills, or like... but no. He didn't want to believe he now had a woman's figure.

When he got to the bathroom mirror, his eyes went wide with shock as he saw he did, indeed, have a woman's figure, a gorgeous, hourglass shape: narrow little shoulders, a dramatically tiny waist flaring out into soft, round



hips... scrawny little arms, round coltish legs... Turning to the side he saw how his breast jutted out, saw the S-curve at the small of his back, flaring out into a big, inviting booty...

He almost cried again, he felt so shocked and ashamed at what he'd become. Markus viewed women as toys, and to him their bodies amounted to an amusement park— from their bouncy breasts to their plump rears, the softness of their thighs—they were all just things for him to play with. Now, he had all those fun parts, those pretty parts. He had them all, and it made him feel inferior, less than. He looked like a boy toy. His tiny little arms horrified him. Flexing, he saw nothing. Not even the slightest bulge.

His little arms advertised his vulnerability. They were an invitation to be dominated. Shame. Shame. Since he'd been 12 years old, he'd worked on building bigger arms, and he'd always gotten turned on as he'd gotten older to see a woman with tiny arms, knowing he would be able to dominate her during sex. Now, he wasn't sure he could dominate a 14-year-old girl.

And yet, at the same time as he felt sick with disgust, another part of him was pleased at the sight of those pretty little arms. They were tone, and they would invite hugs, protection. In fact, men, or the right kind of men, would be drawn to protect him now, and that wasn't so bad, was it?

"Yes," the old him whispered in his sweet new voice. "It's death."

As he climbed into the shower, he saw his old bodywash had been replaced with something called Pretty Girl. Of course. As he lathered soapy suds across his breasts, the smell of coconut and vanilla filled the stall. He decided on a course of action. The only way these changes could be happening, he decided, was magic.

He would need to make a trip to The Grimoirium.

Now, he dreaded he was turning into his mother. She'd always believed in tarot, astrology, magic and mediums. He'd always made fun of her for it, but now he had become just a little more open-minded. He pulled on a t-shirt. It morphed into a pink, too tiny tank top that strained across his breasts. As soon as he slipped into his baggy bro shorts, they shrunk into a pair of tight denim girl shorts. His tennis shoes turned into a pair of pink ballet flats.

Yeah. There was definitely magic at play. Weird magic.

Mussing his still short black hair with his long nails, he looked in the mirror, frowning. His clothes emphasized everything humiliating about his curvy new figure, drew attention to every bit of the woman he'd become: hips, tits, ass. It would be embarrassing to be seen like this. He could only hope he wouldn't run into anyone he knew. He took a deep breath and dug his nails into the palms of his hands, stared right at himself in the mirror and said, "You got this girl."

He paused, rolled his eyes. "I mean guy. You got this, bro." It sounded ridiculous, though, spoken in his squeaky little voice. He headed out the door, determined to find some way to save his manhood.

Markus stood outside The Grimoirium. The town of New Amsterdam dated back to the 1600s, and the ramshackle mansion rising above him had been built, according to the plaque next to the big, aged oak door, in 1676, which made it 100 years older than America. The building was painted in shades of slate, and dark curtains covered every one of the large, lead windows. Gargoyles crouched along the roofline, glaring down with sinister menace. Of the many occult stores in The Dam, this one seemed like his best bet: it was run by Everspell, one of a handful of local superheroes.

Markus marched up the stone stairs, grabbed the brass handle and pulled. “Unh!” Okay, wow, he thought. The door is heavy. He grabbed it with both hands and leaned backward, letting all his body weight help him, and the door slowly, slowly creaked open with a rusty hinged scream. Once he’d gotten the door open enough, Markus let go of the handle, then scurried inside as the door swung closed behind him with a *thunk*.

The store smelled like wax and sage. A dusty grandfather clock stood in the corner, ticking... ticking... ticking...

There was a man sitting at a desk, his face lost in shadows. Markus, aware of how small and vulnerable he was now, glanced back at the big heavy door, then nervously about, trying to spot a more available exit, an escape. A girl could never be too careful.

“May I help you?” The man said, his voice full of gravel and regret.

Heart racing like a little bird, Markus took a few tentative steps toward the desk, making himself small, smiling, doing everything he could to show he was no threat at all, but just a fuzzy little bunny of a girl. “Y-yes. I am looking for a book, a magic book.” His voice sounded like the chirping of a newborn chick to his ears, so much less forceful than the man’s.

“Hahahaha!” The man’s voice boomed out, echoing down the hall. Markus flinched, his hands cupped under his chin. “The book you seek is on the third floor, on the third shelf of the third bookcase.”

“How do you know what I’m looking for?” Markus whispered.

“Because you were once a man, and you are now becoming a beautiful woman against your will.”

“You think I’m beautiful?” Markus couldn’t help but asking, his cheeks growing warm at the compliment. In fact, his heart was growing warm, his whole body. Omigod, he thought. Am I falling in love with shadow man?

Markus wanted to see the man’s face, felt drawn to see the man’s face, and yet, he didn’t dare get any closer. Instead, he turned down a side hallway and rushed toward the stairs, the floorboards creaking under his every step.

As he reached the second floor, he saw a few people browsing among the shelves, an elderly man who even had a long, wizardly beard sitting in an

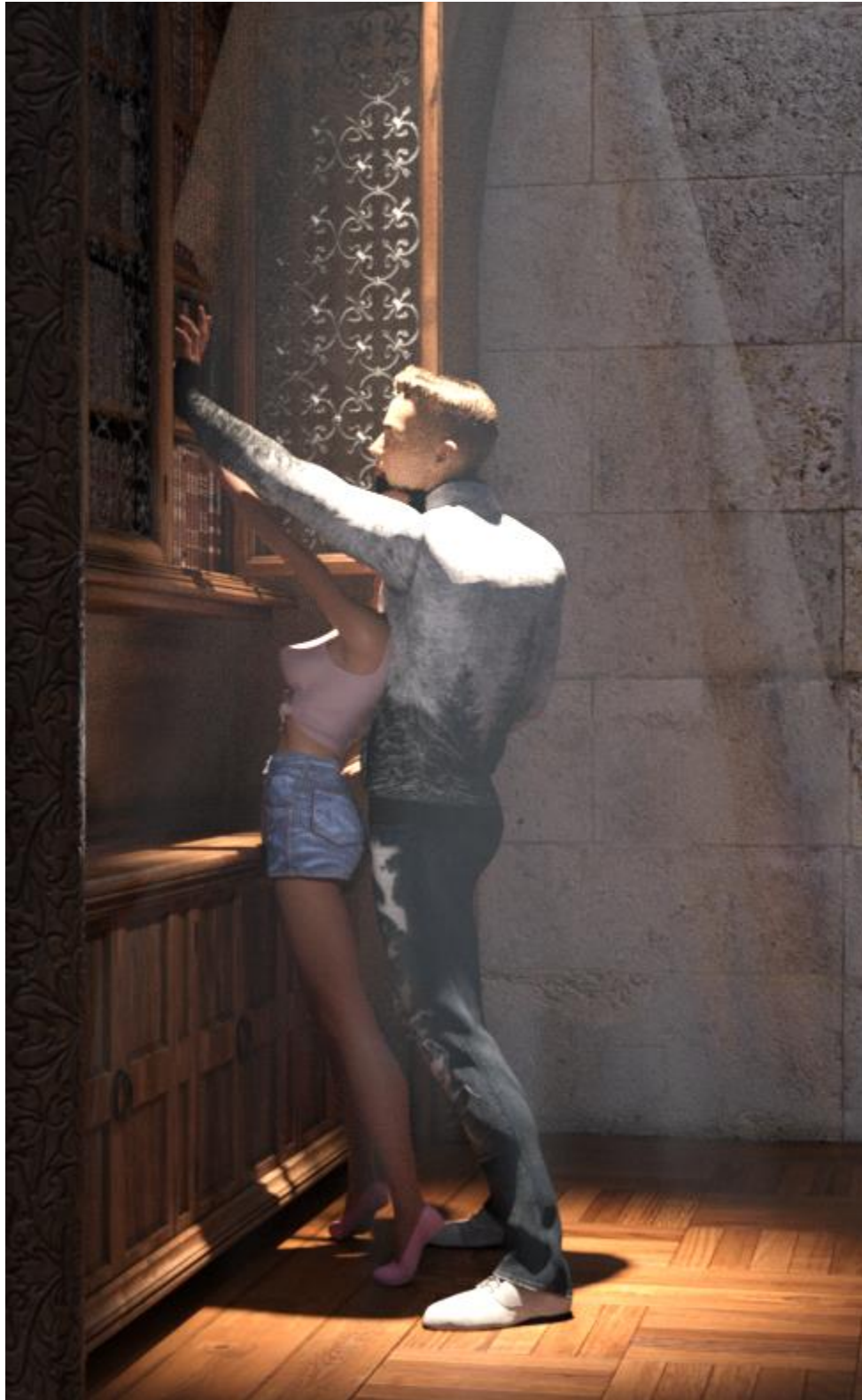


easy chair, reading. When he got to the third floor and peered into the dimly lit room, though, he saw no one. The room looked empty. Once more, Markus’ newly formed feminine instincts took over and he found himself anxious, worried, glancing around nervously as he made his way toward the third bookcase. It wasn’t safe for a woman to be alone.

But, I’m not a woman, he reminded himself, and then, he had to shake his head. It wouldn’t matter if some crazy kidnapper or serial killer saw him. He looked like a woman, and that was all that mattered. Would it matter he was really a guy when some creep decided to kidnap him to make a skin suit? No, it would not.

Walking nervously to the third bookshelf. Markus looked up to the third shelf and his eyes were immediately drawn to one of the titles. “On Physical Curses and Their Removal.” Yes. This had to be the book he needed. He reached up, but the

book was too high. He couldn't reach. He got on his tiptoes, stretching... stretching... *Oh!* He thought, annoyed. *Why do I have to be a short girl?*



Stretching, not wanting to admit he needed a chair or a stepladder to reach a book he could once have easily grabbed, he suddenly felt a body close behind him, a chest just barely brushing against his back. The smell of peppery, masculine body wash filled his head, and warm breath puffed against his ear as a deep, rumbling voice said, "let me get that for you, little lady." That voice! It was like

chocolate for the ears.

As the man reached for the book, he put one hand on Markus' soft hip, and his other brushed against Markus' hand, sending tingles right down to his toes. The feelings terrified Markus, the man invading his space made him scared, which also made him feel angry, threatened.

As the man plucked the book from the shelf, Markus turned to face him, thinking to tell him off, to say—I don't need your help! But, instead, he found himself tilting his head back, back, back... looking up past the man's broad chest and bulging shoulders, to meet his eyes. Such eyes! Markus felt himself getting lost in those eyes, they felt so warm and strong and safe.

"I didn't," he whispered. "I don't..." A smile spreading across his face, and he batted his lashes and whispered, "hi!"

