

“What the Hey?” (2011) [ADULT CONTENT] R: AS. AL. X. M/M

A UFO story – It seems the aliens may have designed a strange gender-changing weapon that threatens to disrupt operations at SHADO HQ.

[Written in answer to a SHADO Guild Challenge].

“What the Hey?”

A UFO Story

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[June 2011 Challenge from SHADO Writer's
Guild Forum]

Author's Note:

Usual Disclaimer - they're not mine, I'm just borrowing them. (And you can blame Matt {grin})

ADULT CONTENT

The flight in from Moonbase causes jet-lag like you wouldn't believe, so I always sleep a good 9 hours when I get home. I awoke feeling more sluggish than usual, yawned, stretched and glanced over at the clock to see it was 2 PM. I'd slept for 12 hours?!

I reached over and grabbed the clock, shook it a few times, like maybe the numbers would turn back if I shook it hard enough. "Sheesh," I said to myself as I sat it gingerly back down. I climbed out of bed and staggered into the bathroom, running a hand through my long blond hair as I went. I splashed some cold water on my face and when I peered into the mirror, I shrieked and turned around, ready to lay out the strange man I'd seen in the mirror. There was no one behind me.

"What the hey?" I said out loud, but it was *not* my voice. I turned back towards the mirror and looked again. I touched my face, ran a finger down my nose, scraped the back of my fingers

along the stubble on my chin. Yes, stubble. The image that looked back at me was that of a man.

I looked inside my pajama top and found ... hair. I slammed my hands over my chest and felt ... NO BOOBS! With a strong sense of dread, I peeked inside my pajama pants and shrieked again.

"Oh, no. No, no, no, no, what the bloody hell?" I was babbling, but what else could I do? "No, this must be a dream." I sighed in relief. That was it - I was still asleep and dreaming. I padded back into the bedroom and collapsed onto the bed.

When next I awoke, I stretched languidly and grinned. "Man, what a dream," I said out loud. With a massive yawn, I made my way into the bathroom to, uh, relieve myself. When, still bleary-eyed, I sat down and started to, you know, *go*, a big stream squirted up and splattered the floor in front of me. "What the ...?"

I looked down to find ... "Oh my ... GOD!" I hastily pushed it down so the rest of the stream would go *inside* the toilet, but my whole body began to tremble uncontrollably. Not a dream, then. "Not a dream, then?" No, this was stupid - how could it happen? It **MUST** be a dream!

Once, my, uh, business was done, I stood and ... what? What do I do now? I sort of ... shook it a bit and then I couldn't resist gingerly feeling behind to see if ... Euw, they were there! I hastily pulled my pants back up.

After washing my hands thoroughly, I peered in the mirror again. I leaned in close and studied my face. It was me alright, only I was definitely a man. And that was a problem because the day before, I had been a woman. In fact, while my memory doesn't really reach that far back, I'm pretty damned sure I was *born* a woman.

These things just don't happen. It's not possible. I pinched myself and winced. Nothing changed. I was still a man. Now, I've seen some really strange things in my life - especially since joining SHADO, but this was ridiculous! Did the aliens do this? To what possible end? What advantage could a gender-changing weapon possibly serve?

This line of thought was getting me nowhere. What I really needed to figure out was what to do now? I couldn't just go into the office - my security badge would never work, since the photo was obviously of a woman! I had to get in touch with someone, but how? I couldn't phone - who would believe this masculine voice was me?

I found my cell phone and sent a text message - hoped that would be enough. All I could do then was wait. I sighed. Then I climbed into the shower and tried to ignore the extra bits I knew I shouldn't have.

Unfortunately, the act of lathering the soap sort of ... aroused me. I groaned. I knew what I had to do, of course, but I didn't have to be happy about it. That thought went out the window pretty quick, though. This felt *great*. Now I understood why guys liked it so much. Who knew?

The doorbell rang as I was lingering - the warm water trickling down my body. I registered the sound with the second ring and jumped out of the shower. I almost slipped on the wet floor as I hastened to wrap a towel around myself. I started to wrap it above my breasts, but remembered I had nothing to hold it up, so wrapped it around my waist instead.

I took a deep breath before opening the door.

"Er," Colonel Paul Foster hesitated. "I, uh, was looking for Virginia?," he said.

"Come in, Paul," I said, standing aside to let him pass.

"Um, I don't know what you're ..."

"It's me, Paul - just come in and let me explain."

"Me who?"

God, but he can be dense sometimes! "Paul, look at me - it's me - I've no idea what happened and that's why I called you! Well, texted you. I need help, dammit, so come in so I can shut the damned door!"

He walked in like a zombie and glared at me closely. "Sheesh, is it really you?"

"Yes, Paul." I sat down on the edge of the sofa with a despondent sigh. "I don't know what to do."

He grinned. "Well, hell, you're a good-looking guy, Ginny," he said.

I gawped at him. Really? I've suddenly switched gender and he's admiring my physique? He snickered and I had to grin too. "Damn, I guess I should laugh to keep from crying, huh?"

"Well, you may be pleased - or not - to know that the same thing has happened to Lieutenant Bradley. His voice is even higher now, if you can believe that."

"So ... everyone knows?"

"Well, no - not everyone, but I'm sure Jackson would like to examine you. Straker has been trying to call you all day, ya know."

"What?" I checked the phone. "Oh, I always turn the ringer off after a shuttle trip. Cell phone too. I just couldn't believe it when I woke up today."

"And so ... you contacted *me* ..."

His grin was insufferable. "Well, who else could I have called? Who else would ever believe it?"

"So, just how complete is this ... *transformation?*"

Foster reached for the towel, but I slapped his hand. "**Behave!** You're not an adolescent, Paul!" I had to grin back at him, though. "It is quite complete, I assure you."

"Well, get dressed - I'll drive you to HQ."

"I don't think I'd look very good in a skirt now - or even a pink jumper."

"Hmm," he pondered a moment. "Well, throw something on - we'll go to my place. I should have something that'll fit you."

I looked him up and down and then examined myself. I was still shorter, but otherwise, my new build was a pretty close match to his. I turned and walked back into my bedroom, rummaged through my closet, my drawers - nothing I owned would be appropriate for a man. I sighed, was absently scratching my belly as I pondered what to put on when I realized my fingers were tangling in hair. I shuddered and grabbed my lavender pant suit.

It was a little tight and I looked ridiculous, but it couldn't be helped. When I walked back out, Paul was sitting on the sofa with a soda can in his hand. "Don't say *anything*," I warned him, but his smirk was enough. "I swear to God, Paul ..." but I was chuckling too hard to finish my threat.

"Come on, *Vinny*," Paul said as he smoothly rose to his feet. "Let's find something more suitable for you to wear, huh?"

On the way down to his car, I asked, "How does Mark look?"

"Oh, I dunno - I haven't seen him, er, *her* yet."

"Then how do you know his - her voice is higher?"

"Well, must be, surely."

I laughed. I mused during the car ride. I hadn't grown any taller, so chances are, Mark Bradley hadn't gotten shorter - so he must be a really tall woman. I couldn't help wondering what he was wearing right now. I became aware of a sort of expectation in the car and turned to Paul. "Did you say something?" I asked.

"I said you look fetching in lavender."

"Hey, if you can have a mauve car, then I can have a lavender pantsuit."

He snickered and I joined him. This whole situation was ludicrous and a part of me was still waiting to wake up.

Luckily, there wasn't a whole lot of people around when we walked into his apartment building, but even one was too many for me. I took a deep breath, squared my newly broad shoulders and walked in like I owned the place - pretending to ignore any stares or snickers. As soon as his door was closed behind us, I collapsed onto his sofa and sighed loudly.

"I *never* want to do *that* again!" I exclaimed.

"No?" Paul mocked. "You were quite good at it."

I grinned. "I'm so glad you're enjoying this," I told him.

"Oh, but a guy has to get his laughs some way and fighting aliens offers so few opportunities."

I shook my head, but couldn't really argue with that. "Okay, big boy, let me see your closet."

"Okay, new boy, let's go."

He led the way to his bed room. I didn't mean to, but I had to let out an awed breath when I saw it. I guess I had expected a gaudy round bed and mirrors on the ceiling or something, but this was nice and understated. Dark wood paneling and a very masculine mahogany four-poster bed with matching chest of drawers. There was a gas fireplace with a few photos on the mantel. I looked closer to see there were several of Paul in flight suit with one experimental plane or another and one publicity shot of Paul with Commander Straker and the Big White Chief was actually smiling - a rare occurrence to be caught on film, but this seemed genuine.

He opened his closet door with a flourish and I was awed again by his huge walk-in closet. "Wow," I said out loud.

He chuckled and I think I blushed a bit. He pulled out several of his Nehru outfits, but I didn't think that look was for me. We finally settled on a pair of black slacks and a white oxford shirt. I had to roll up the pant legs a few times, but I looked pretty good otherwise. In bare feet. None of my high heels had fit (thank goodness) and Paul's shoes didn't fit either.

"Your, uh, feet are bigger than mine," he said with a frown. "Just, uh, what do you have in your - that is, in my pants?"

"What?"

"Well, you know what they say ... big hands, big feet, big ... well, you know." He grinned mischievously.

I chuckled. "What?"

"Let's see what you've got, mister."

"Oh, I don't think so," I refused, shaking my head.

"Afraid you might be puny?"

I laughed. "Are you insane?"

"Just curious - *Vinny*."

"I'm not stripping."

"Then tell me - you've seen mine. How does yours compare?"

"What? I don't know."

"What do you mean, you don't know? Haven't you *looked* at it?"

"Well ... not as *such*, no."

"Okay, look," he said. "Once we get you to HQ, Jackson is gonna be all over you and before ya know it, you'll be cured. If you'd like a chance to know what it's *really* like to be a man, you better take that chance now."

I crossed my arms and skeptically said, "And what is it like to *really* be a man?"

"Anal sex is *amazing*."

I rolled my eyes and threw my arms up in disgust. "I *knew* you'd end up there."

"Hey, you will not have another chance to experience sex as a man and you know it."

I sat down on the bed with an exasperated sigh. The bed was surprisingly comfortable. In a way, he was right, of course, but I really hated to say so. Did I *want* to experience sex as a man? I couldn't deny how good it felt in the shower. And

if, ya know, *self massage* could feel so good, how great would the real thing feel?

I chewed my bottom lip a moment and looked up at him. "So ... *you* want to ..." There was no polite way to say it, so I said it. "*Fuck me?*"

"You can fuck me first if it would make you feel better."

"What?" That surprised me.

"Hey, I swing both ways, babe - didn't you know that?"

"Well ..." No, I actually hadn't. "I, uh ... *really?*"

He laughed and started to peel off his suit.

Could I do this? I'd been with Paul before, of course. I felt comfortable with him. As a lover, he was more than adequate with just the right amount of gentleness and aggression. He had

never made any undue demands on me - always seemed content with whatever I wanted to give and that was a rare quality. If I was going to try this, I couldn't think of anyone else I could trust so implicitly - certainly not any of my girl friends.

Oh, Hell - he was already half aroused - why should I refuse? I quickly stripped and blushed furiously as he examined me closely.

He grinned. "You are *amazingly* attractive," he said. "And it's good to know the new you still finds me attractive as well."

Confused, I looked down and found myself stiffening. "Oh, God," I muttered.

"Hey," he put his hand on my shoulder. "It's not a bad thing." He placed his other hand on my chest and slid it down, down - till he wrapped his fingers around my - it was so weird to even think about it as mine, but it was - *my cock*.

I shuddered. Then I watched amazed as he knelt down and wrapped his lips around me. When he sucked me in deep, I moaned and sat down hard on the bed. So, this is what he felt whenever I went down on him. He looked up at me and grinned around the - *my* shaft.

"Oh. My. God." I wrapped the fingers of one hand through his hair and leaned back on my other hand as he slurped, sucked and even nibbled the entire length of my growing new organ. "I could get used to this."

When I felt him chuckle around his mouthful, I looked down at him and frowned. "Did I say that out loud?" I asked.

He released me and disentangled himself from my grasping fingers. "Yes, you did," he told me, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Lie down," he demanded, shoving me back to punctuate the order. He pushed my legs up onto

the bed and then climbed up after me - positioned himself over me and went back to work with his mouth - his own erection dangling enticingly over my face.

Well, who was I to refuse the invite? I swallowed him down and was pleased to hear - and feel the moan he uttered. Who knew this could be so much fun? Well, Paul did, evidently, but I sure didn't.

My orgasm took me by surprise - much as it had in the shower earlier. When I ejaculated, I felt Paul gag a moment and then he sucked hard to milk every last drop. I was spent and wanted to get catatonic - I understood now why guys get like that - but he was still down my throat and I didn't want to disappoint, so I worked on him another few minutes before he exploded too. I tried - as I usually do - to swallow it all, but I failed - as I usually do - and most of it dribbled down my chin.

He got up and turned himself around to collapse next to me. He took a few deep breaths and then leaned down to lick my face clean - as he usually did. Then he propped himself up on one elbow and looked down at me. He was grinning.

"So, uh ... was I okay?" I asked.

"You were great - as usual," he answered. "Was I okay?"

"Oh, God yes."

He laughed.

"Is it, uh ... okay for guys to spoon afterwards?" I asked.

"Sure - you wanna be the outer spoon or the inner spoon?"

I laughed now. "Inner, please."

He rolled towards me and spread his arms to take me as I scooted back against him and snuggled into his embrace.

This felt nice. A little different from when, you know, when I was a woman - but still nice. I could so easily have fallen asleep like that, but I felt him hardening against me and when I glanced down my body, I noticed his fondling fingers had done the same for me.

"Really?" I asked. I wasn't sure I was ready to go again, but he evidently was.

"You haven't fucked me yet," he pointed out.

I turned in his arms and faced him. "Are you *really* going to let me do that?"

"I said I would - aren't you curious?"

"Well, yeah, but ..."

"But what?"

I shrugged. "I dunno - I never knew you were so ... *keen*."

He grinned wickedly. I was watching his eyes, so I didn't notice his hands moving and I shuddered with an electrical jolt when he tweaked both my nipples. My breasts had always been sensitive as a woman, but I didn't expect it to still work for me as a man.

When he saw the reaction, he grinned wickedly again and leaned over to torture my nubs with his teeth.

I thrashed on the bed and almost threw him off.

"Whoa!" He laughed and I apologized profusely.

"You're a man now, luv - gotta learn your own strength."

It was my turn to grin wickedly now. I pushed him down and straddled his waist, attacked his nips with abandon.

He moaned satisfactorily and I felt him slap up against my backside.

"Maybe you should fuck me now," he said breathlessly. "Before I come already. Might not be able to get it up a third time ..."

I laughed and slid down between his legs. "How does this work?" I asked. I had never really thought about how two guys would ... well ... you know.

"You *have* had anal sex before, right?"

I'm sure I blushed. "You know I have, but ..."

"When we did it, you were on your hands and knees, but I want to watch you, so I'll stay on my back." He bent his knees up and rotated his hips

so I could see his ... *entrance*. "Use a little lube and then lift my legs - if you can rest my ankles on your shoulders, that would help - and then, ya know - go for it."

I'm sure I blushed now. If it had been anyone other than Paul, I probably would have backed down and fled, but he had a way of making me feel comfortable. The things he has talked me into trying ... Anyway, I did as he said and then I ... well, I eased into him.

He moaned contentedly as I pushed deeper and deeper inside him and then he bucked his hips and let out a sort of yelp. I froze - horrified that I had hurt him. "Sorry," I said hastily.

"For what?" he said breathlessly. "You just hit my prostate and that's the whole fun of male anal sex. Keep doing that and I just might explode again."

I grinned and tried to find that spot again. And again. And again. It was fun watching him squirm and moan, but it was a lot of work. I had a new found respect for men everywhere. As tiring as it was, though, it felt awfully good. I mean, it obviously felt good to Paul, but wow, the friction was really doing crazy things for me too.

This time I felt the pressure building up, felt the tingle in my gut, actually felt my, uh ... *scrotum* drawing up tight against my shaft. I was about to come and I somehow managed to convey that fact to Paul.

"Go ... ahead," he somehow managed to tell me. He had encircled the base of his ... *equipment* and was squeezing hard - trying not to come himself.

When the wave hit me, I thrust deep and groaned loudly as I sprayed inside him. It sure as heck felt different - being inside someone as I ... you know, *ejaculated*. When I was done, I

collapsed across his chest, dropping his legs and popping out of him on the way down.

After a moment to recover, he put a big hand against my back and gently rubbed in tiny circles.

After another moment for me to recover, I asked, "Is it always like that?"

"Pretty much."

I slowly lifted my head to gaze at his bemused grin. "Well, I guess I can understand why you're so keen, Paul."

His grin grew wider and he gently rolled me off him onto my back and then leaned down to kiss me.

I got lost in the kisses and wasn't really paying attention till I felt the viscous lube being rubbed into me. I was never a big fan of, uh, anal

sex, so I braced myself and moaned quietly as he entered me. It was about as usual until: "OH MY GOD!" I bucked my hips and almost threw us both off the bed.

Paul laughed. "I told you the prostate is the whole fun of male anal sex."

I was stunned. "Is that what you did?"

He nodded and started thrusting again. I waited in anxious anticipation for the next ... what? Jolt? That's what it felt like - an electrical jolt straight up through my body. And once he found the spot, he kept at it relentlessly. I was absolutely thrashing on the bed and damned if I hadn't gotten hard again. By the time he stilled and came, I was screaming and shooting again too.

He flopped down next to me and we both lay there panting for quite some time. Finally, I said, "Paul?"

"Hmm?"

"Thanks."

He chuckled quietly for a moment and then rolled over, propped himself on one elbow and started running a finger up and down my chest and belly. "You know," he said. "I bet I could ..."

"No," I told him, grabbing his hand and holding it still. "Not again."

"You sure?"

He has such a boyish grin - it's contagious. I grinned back but I held firm. "No, let's go." I shoved him back over and got up, stretched. This new body felt stronger, but I had aches in places I never knew existed.

We both got dressed in relative silence. Paul offered me a pair of his underwear, but I told him the panties were fine - who would know?

"I will," he said with another of his wolfish grins.

As he was putting on his shoes, he asked, "So, are we gonna go buy you a cheap pair of shoes or are you gonna go in barefoot?"

"Lord, I dunno." I ran my fingers through my hair. "Better find a pair of shoes."

"Okay, there's a place just up the street. Wear these into the shop." He tossed over a pair of black flip-flops. "And best to tie that mane of hair back." He tossed me a hair tie.

"Why do you have this?" I asked, tying my hair back into a pony tail.

He shrugged. "Never know when I might need one. Like now."

The embarrassment was kept to a minimum at the shoe store and I left with a new pair of socks and a new pair of black loafers.

I was not looking forward to my entrance into SHADO HQ.

I reached for my SHADO ID at the gate, but Paul stayed my hand and said simply, "He's with me," and walked through without a backward glance.

"Er, I'm with him," I mumbled on my way through behind him. No one flinched.

"You arrogant bastard," I accused when I'd caught up to him.

"Hey, do you think anyone would challenge Colonel Lake if she escorted someone in?"

"Well ..."

"No, course not, but if we had tried to explain how *you* could possibly *be* Colonel Lake, what would have happened?"

"Hmm, would have been a bit of a mess, huh?"

"Yep, now let's get moving - Straker has been waiting all day and you know how he gets when he's kept waiting."

"Did he know you were going after me?"

"Uh-huh."

"Then what the hell are we gonna tell him when he asks what took so long?"

"The truth?"

That damned grin again. I shuddered at the thought of explaining the truth to Commander Straker, but we had arrived at Ed's office door. I took a deep breath before entering reception. Miss Ealand glanced up and *almost* managed to stifle a smirk. She cleared her throat and said, "Go right in, he's waiting for you and he's *not* happy."

She pushed a button on her desk and the outer door swung silently open. Paul pushed open the inner door and walked right in and I followed close behind, but I still wasn't sure just how I should play this.

Straker waited till both doors had closed before quietly asking, "Where the hell have you been?"

"Having wild passionate homosexual sex, Commander."

Paul actually said that. I was mortified! Straker raised one eyebrow and turned to me.

"Er," I stammered. "I, uh, needed clothes and, um, shoes, Sir." I lifted one foot to show him my shoes, but he didn't look down. Instead, he looked from one of us to the other a few times, like he was trying to decide who was telling the truth. We both were, actually, but I never found out what he finally decided because Straker dropped it and moved on.

He leaned back in his chair and said, "Jackson thinks he may be able to reverse this ... *condition*, Lake, but one blood sample isn't enough. He needs one from you as well."

"Yes, Sir."

"*Now*," he added after a moment.

"Oh, right."

"Go with her. Him. Whatever." He waved his hand in dismissal and turned his attention back to the pile of paperwork on his desk.

Paul and I hastened out of the office. On the way past, Miss Ealand called to me.

"Ginny?" she said.

"That's *Vinny*," Paul corrected

I know I blushed and Ealand coloured slightly too. "I just wanted to ask ... did it hurt?"

"What, the change? No, I don't think so. It happened while I was asleep."

"Well, you uh, look quite handsome."

"Told ya!" Paul exclaimed and I'm pretty sure I blushed again on the way out.

The walk to Doctor Jackson's office was not a long distance, but I dragged out the journey. It's not that he's an unpleasant man, exactly, it's just that ... well, he is kind of *creepy*. He could be brilliant at times and we were lucky to have him, but I've never enjoyed having his scrutiny focused on me.

When we got to the door, we stopped and I lingered. "Thanks for not pushing me," I said.

"I understand completely," Paul responded, and I realized he probably did.

I smiled bravely and walked in with Paul on my heels.

Jackson was leaning over a microscope, paying us no mind. We both knew this could take a while, so we sat to wait.

After about ten minutes, he looked up and said, "Yes?"

"Colonels Foster and Lake reporting as ordered, Doctor," Paul said. Why was he so damned Chipper? Maybe because it hadn't happened to him.

Jackson stared at us like we were aliens for a moment and then said, "Right - blood sample." He swiveled his chair around and grabbed a syringe and several vials, then turned back. "Over here, please."

I glanced over at Paul as I stood and he just shrugged. I walked over and sat in front of the Doctor.

"Roll up your sleeve, please."

I did so and he drew the blood without comment. You would think I hadn't actually switched gender overnight.

"Thank you, Colonel," he said and that was it. He ignored us like we weren't even there.

"Um," I ventured. "Am I allowed to know just what the hell is going on?"

He looked up at me and frowned. "You have changed gender, Colonel, I would have thought that was obvious to you by now."

I grimaced and announced, "You know, there are times when I have such a bloody great urge to kick the shit out of you, Jackson." Oooh, I hadn't really meant to say that out loud, but I'd meant it and it was out there now, so nothing to be done about it.

He blinked at me. "I see you have fully embraced your new-found masculinity, Colonel."

My turn to blink now. "What?"

Paul laughed and stood. "C'mon, Vinny, I'll explain over a cup of strong SHADO coffee."

I didn't want coffee, so I got tea. Before we had even gotten down on the seats, I asked, "What was that all about?"

"What was what all about?"

"Why did I say that out loud like that?"

"Because, my dear, you are now a man."

"And that's supposed to explain it?"

He grinned. "You're full of testosterone and you haven't figured out how to control it yet. It's like you're going through puberty."

"Oh *God*," I moaned miserably. "I've already done that once and I sure as hell don't want to do it again."

"Well, the first time, you went through girl's puberty - now you're a guy. Can't act on urges like that. You go around telling everyone exactly what you're thinking and you'll get your arse kicked."

I sighed heavily and sipped my tea. "This is not gonna be easy, is it?"

"Hey, maybe Jackson will figure it out and cure you tonight."

"Yeah, I wouldn't hold my breath," I scoffed. Then it struck me and I asked, "Where's Mark?"

"Last I heard, Gay had taken *her* under her wing."

"Wow, I'd like to be a fly on *that* wall." I took a sip of tea and then glanced over at Paul to find him smirking at me. "What?"

"You are *such* a bloke," he replied with a chuckle.

"Oh, I didn't mean ..." I blushed. "Well, maybe I did, I dunno."

He laughed and I had to laugh with him. The laughter eased some of the tension, but I don't mind admitting that I was scared.

I slept in one of the private officer's suites on site that night - alone. The next morning, I went back to Doctor Jackson's office looking for some answers and ran into Lieutenant Bradley. He ... *she* looked ... well, pretty good, actually. Mark Bradley had been a tall man and as a woman, she was quite imposing. Right now she was wearing a man's suit, but it looked okay on

her. Lieutenant Gay Ellis had obviously taught her something about make-up, because what she had on was understated, but elegant. The shoes were flat and functional, but I had to laugh at the Hello Kitty handbag.

"Oh, ha, ha," she scoffed at me irritably.

"Sorry, but the handbag is perfect!"

She rolled her eyes and smirked. "You look pretty good, Colonel."

Bradley always had a high voice and now it was indeed higher. "So do you - the make-up is inspired."

"Oh, you like?" She posed melodramatically.

I laughed again and sat next to her. "Gotta laugh or cry, right?" I said.

"Did a bunch of that yesterday. Do women always feel like this? It's a wonder you ever stop crying at all."

"Hmm, you're just getting used to the hormone shift. I actually told off Jackson yesterday."

"Really? Heh, wish I could have seen that. Course, I probably would have cried about it."

We were giggling like schoolgirls when Doctor Doug Jackson walked in.

"Vinny, Marcia, what can I do for you today?" he purred.

"You *could* switch us back to normal," I encouraged.

"That really would be most agreeable," Bradley agreed.

Jackson actually smiled. It was a bit frightening. "I'm afraid there is really nothing I can do. You are both perfectly healthy, though, and after a week of mandatory psychological testing, you will assuredly be cleared for duty. Any other information you will have to get from the Commander."

He went back to whatever he usually did - and I didn't really want to know - and it was like we no longer existed. A part of me wanted to stay there and see how long it would take for him to acknowledge my existence again, but Bradley dragged me out.

"You got it bad, Colonel," she said to me out in the hall.

I shook my head. "Colonel Foster told me I can't go around acting on impulses."

"And I can't go around weeping all over the place either."

We snickered on our way to Commander Straker's office. The sight of that stern looking door sobered us up, though and we knocked reverently.

"Come" came the muffled invitation.

The outer door swung open. The inner door was already open. We both took a deep breath before walking in. Ed Straker was at his desk, reading a SHADO report with EYES ONLY stamped on the front.

The Commander could be imposing, but I never really felt frightened of him before. Right now, I felt an irrational urge to confront him. Over anything! Paul had been right about controlling my urges. I shuddered slightly and glanced sideways at Bradley next to me. There was no way to know what she was thinking.

Straker looked up and said, "Yes? What can I do for you today?"

Seriously, I wanted to hit him. It was a real struggle to speak calmly. "You can explain whatever you've found out about our condition because Dr. Jackson isn't talking other than to say we're *healthy*." He raised an eyebrow and I added, "Sir."

He grinned unexpectedly and leaned back in his chair, stretched his long legs out. "The two of you *are* healthy," he said. "You have also changed genders. But I'm sure you've realized that by now. Okay," he sat up and picked up the report he had been reading, gestured with it as he spoke.

"This is a report from Moonbase. When you left Moonbase to come home, you passed by a Ufoe hidden from view which subsequently crash landed on the moon. This craft was unusual in that it was evidently equipped with some sort of

cloaking device as well as something else - something as yet to be determined. It was this other device that apparently caused your ... condition. Research is ongoing, but we hope this same device will be able to reverse the process. Reverse engineering will take time, though."

He dropped the file back on his desk. "Still, can't be all bad, can it? You both seem to have adapted well enough."

"With all due respect, Commander," Bradley said calmly. "We'll see how well I've adapted when I get my *period*."

Straker raised his eyebrow again and when I burst out laughing, he joined me. Bradley folded her arms and scowled. It was nice to see Ed laugh - he so rarely let himself go.

"Sorry, Mark - er, Marcia, is it now? But I can't make the research go any faster."

"You could try, sir."

"I will try. Any questions?"

"Guess not, sir," Bradley said.

I just shrugged.

"Fine, Bradley, you can go - report to Psyche for eval - Jackson wants you for a week, but I told him he can have two days. Lake, you stay - I have some questions for you."

For the first time in my life, I actually felt a pang of intimidation. It made me want to hit him all the more.

"What're you grinning at, Colonel?"

I jumped slightly. I hadn't been aware I was smiling. "Just coming to terms with feeling like a man, sir," I told him. "I never realized what

conflicting emotions you constantly have to deal with."

"Where were you yesterday? I tried all day to contact you."

"I overslept, Commander. I felt unnaturally tired, sir and when I woke up ... well, I was a little shocked to say the least."

He leaned back and steepled his fingers as he often did when in contemplation. A small smile played over his lips, though. He was enjoying my discomfort.

"May I sit, sir?"

"By all means, Vinny, is it now?"

I sat heavily in an overstuffed chair. "That was Paul's idea, but I guess it's as good a name as any. Seriously, Ed, any idea at all what the

device is? And why would they want to change a person's gender?"

"Well, we are pretty sure the gender change was an unforeseen consequence. As to what the thing is *supposed* to do, there are several theories floating around, but the favourite seems to be it's some sort of time manipulation device."

I groaned loudly.

"Hmmm," he agreed. "Better you than me this time."

"Oh, thanks."

He spread his hands in supplication. "Just muttering the truth. You don't *really* want to see *me* in a *skirt*, do you?"

I smiled. "That might be interesting, actually."

"Well, I do have the legs for it."

We both laughed and any tension I had been feeling eased. "Really, Ed, do you think this can be fixed or will I have to live the rest of my life as a man?"

"Would that be so terrible?"

I sighed. "Maybe, maybe not."

"R&D are working full out on a solution. If it can be done, they'll do it, Gin - Vin."

"And in the mean time, I'm stuck with Jackson probing my mind?"

"Two days is all he gets. Sooner you start, sooner you'll be done, but I want a full report on what happened yesterday by end of day today."

"Full report? You mean my activities? My *private* activities?"

He narrowed his eyes at me. "How *private*?"

"*Sexual*."

He pondered a moment, raised an eyebrow and then said, "Don't wanna know, Colonel - dismissed."

I grinned and walked out the opening door.

----- To Be Continued? -----