

# Black history month

FEBRUARY 2023



Clarissa had always been the top student in her class, your stereotypical valedictorian. She was a diligent student in any subject, and definitely a smart girl but sometimes she didn't realise how much of her success she owed to her privileged wealthy, white background. She saw herself as better than anyone else, especially people than who struggled with their studies, many of whom happened to be minorities.

As a freshman in college, she was asked to write an essay on the history of the struggles of the African-American community as part of a new program aiming at extending the tradition of the Black history month after High school.

She hated having to waste time on these tasks when she could be studying something more relevant, but started writing the essay anyway. Half way through it, she stopped, realising like her words were empty and superficial. She was just rephrasing what she had read in books or listened to in podcasts. "I wish I could grasp this subject better!" - she mumbled. As soon as she pronounced these words, she felt a warm feeling pervading her and immediately everything started to change.

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The poor girl stood up, trying to understand what was going on, but could only helplessly witness the changes taking place in her body. The pigmentation on her arms and legs suddenly began to change, turning her skin brown and spreading upwards, leaving her palms a couple of shades of brown lighter than the rest of her arms. Her skin stops changing when it has reached a rich light brown hue, sun-kissed and flawless. Unnoticed by her, her pink nipples darkened and widened, leaving her with dark brown aureolas. The same shift affected her labia.

“What’s up with my skin?” - she screamed. Her turtleneck shrank and got replaced by a red top crop, revealing the new lovely mocha brown skin color on her chest and shoulders. Her wavy brown hair turned jet black and rearranged itself in long, elaborated locs, which felt hard and alien on her bare shoulders. “My hair! Oh no, please God no! This can’t be” - she shouted, beginning to understand, while her pubic hair changed accordingly, becoming black and kinky. Meanwhile, her hips cracked, and she realised she was growing curvier.

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Her skull felt like it being crushed, as her phenotype and heritage shifted: her jaw becoming more protruded, while her nose flattened and enlarged, her lips became plump and pouty while her teeth grew bigger and a small gap formed between her upper incisors. Finally, her hazel eyes darkened to a full black color. "Aaah" - she shouted, her voice changing along the way to a lower, huskier tone as her vocal cords shifted. Large hoop earrings suddenly hanged from her ears and her fingernails grew long extensions coated in white polish to complement her new look. Then the weird feeling that had started her transformation faded away as quickly as it came and left Clarissa hyperventilating and staring at her brown arms and afro locs. Had this happened for real? Did some supernatural force turn her wish into reality, in a twisted way?

Clarissa frantically grabbed her glasses and rushed towards a nearby mirror to check her new body, without realizing that her vision had been healed and she could see properly without her glasses. The previously pasty white girl was gone, replaced with a good-looking African-American girl.

"Ohh mah Gaaw!!! Mah body has changed! I'm a ebony chahck!" - she shouted in her new, husky voice.

Even more shocked by hearing herself speak in ebonics, she tried again: "Is dahs mah voice now? Do I speak lahke a ghetto gal?"

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The realisation that she now spoke like an uneducated Black girl from the hood hit her as hard as her physical transformation. Whatever had happened to her didn't spare anything from the metamorphosis. Even the way she walked and carried herself let away a very different background from her original one. Even if all of her knowledge and intelligence had been preserved, it would be now hard for her to convince people she was.

"As crazy as it sounds, I have been changed into a Black girl" - she thought, avoiding to think loud to avoid hearing her new, foreign voice.

When she calmed down, she started realising a series of other changes occurred to her room. Her large library had been replaced with an empty wall decorated only with a movie poster, her MacBook disappeared and the view from her window went from that of a high-rise building downtown to that of a two-story block in the bad part of town. Her bed was covered in crop tops, bras, ripped jeans and miniskirts. A flashy pink purse hanging from her chair caught her attention, in a wallet she found an ID belonging to a girl looking like her. The name was Chantelle Jackson.