

Brand new world

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In a future closer than we might imagine, Europe is torn apart. Most of the East, along with Scandinavia, folds into the Russian sphere, absorbed piece by piece into the new Russian empire's cultural tapestry.

Most of the West drifts under American control, in a blur of slogans, surgically enhanced influencers, and fast-food patriotism. China and Japan get their slices of the cake too while the Iberian Peninsula falls under Saudi influence. Again. The Balkans take a different route.

Compliance becomes law.

Speak their language. Forget your holidays. Burn your history books. In the West they call it integration. In the East, they prefer re-education. Some are Russified. Others Americanized.

None of them get to stay who they were.

Young Scandinavian women are the first to go. Names altered. Traditions banned. Identity dismantled and reconstructed.

BRAND NEW WORLD - RUSSIAN SCANDINAVIA





Slavification is a slow process, culminating in a ceremony crowning years of cultural re-education and neurological rewiring.

Here we see Vilde Johansen, from the coastal Norwegian city of Kristiansand, now reborn in the heart of empire. After successfully completing her re-education, she was given the name Ekaterina Petrova in a formal ceremony held in a gilded hall in St. Petersburg.

The ritual had a double meaning – secular allegiance and spiritual submission. She surrenders her invalid Norwegian passport in exchange for a Russian one and renounces Protestantism in favor of the Orthodox Church, kneeling beneath the cold gaze of the Patriarch of Moscow. Her rebirth is a spectacle. Flanked by oligarchs with wolfish smiles the ceremonial kokoshnik weigh heavy on her brow, its jewels cold against her skin. Now, she floats through St. Petersburg's glittering salons, a trophy of conquest. Her accent—a stubborn fleck of Nordic flavor—draws their fascination. "So exotic," they purr, tracing the vowels she dare not voice. Moscow's elite already call them "our little Vikings". Scandinavian-turned Russian women are often secretly coveted by influential men in Russia but Ekaterina is already taken.



Once a proud, nationalistic girl, convinced of her country's greatness, of her own superiority, she's been broken down piece by piece and turned into a good Russian woman. She has learned how Slavic people had long inhabited her lands, and how she could no longer lie to herself and deny her Slavic heritage. Scandinavian special characters leave space to the Cyrillic alphabet. Norwegian culture is banned and entirely replaced with Russian one. Fiskesuppe disappears from menus, replaced by beef and beet borscht. The national day is moved to Victory day. Inside the treatment rooms, electrodes target specific regions of the brain. Some stimulate speech centers. Others rewire emotional triggers.

Vilde was once introverted, quiet. Now, as Ekaterina, she can't stop talking. Her voice fills every room before anyone else can enter it. She's also happier now. But she doesn't show it. Smiling, she's been taught, is for naïve girls. For Westerners.

It hasn't always been easy for her though. After her family's wealth was seized, she was forced to abandon her economics degree and reassigned to a year of mandatory civil service—as an au pair maid in rural Russia.



She scrubbed bathtubs, folded lingerie, and learned to make pelmeni and borscht. "Your man will love these," the wife told her, with a knowing smile. She cared for the children while the couple went out for dinner. She learned how to sing lullabies in Russian. When the newborn wouldn't take formula, they didn't ask politely. "You're young. Healthy. She'll latch." - they simply said, as if it was a natural choice. And so she breastfed their child. It felt weird at first but then turned into something mechanical. Her breasts swelled, fuller and warmer, her figure shifting without her consent.

One gray afternoon, the house was empty except for her and the stable boy. He was lean, tanned. His hands were calloused, his jaw unshaven and he smelled like hay. Still, she fancied him. She wasn't supposed to notice people like him. Not back when she was still a girl of means. But now, as a poor au pair girl with rough hands and accented Russian? She couldn't exactly hold out for a politburo heir.

She watched the way his forearms flexed when he closed the gate. She swallowed her pride. Stepped closer and took his hand. "Ты милый," she whispered. You're cute. He blinked. Smiled. And for the first time in months, she didn't feel foreign.

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Most of Sweden is also Russified, following a similar path to the one Ekaterina went through. Some are even relocated to Siberia, since they can cope well with that climate.

In Swedish Lapland, however, the Sami reclaim their dominion with quiet ferocity, after centuries of humiliations, on behalf of the Russian authorities.

Here, we see Malin, from the Northern Swedish city of Umeå, who after having been successfully re-educated in Sami culture and language, took the name Rávdná. Her thesis on pediatric oncology became kindling; her mother's heirloom silver, melted into reindeer bells. Her dresses are replaced by a few traditional Sami gákti.

Reluctantly, she agrees, knowing she has no choice.

After a while, she loses interest in her medicine studies and settles for a simpler life as a reindeer shepard. They drape her in gákti of cobalt and tin. The tundra's breath carves her anew-chapped hands, sinew forged by blizzards. Survival, she learned, was a series of surrenders.

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Eventually, she becomes eligible to turn her permanent residency into full citizenship. She's confused, as she is in fact a local. But they tell her only true Sami people can be granted full citizenship rights. She signs some papers in a language she is still trying to master but she gets the idea.

The procedure takes place in a sterile clinic. Needles hum, dyeing her light irises to peat-black, artfully stitching epicanthic folds, lowering her nose bridge and altering her cheekbones. Her pale skintone takes on a darker hue. Her hair will now from naturally black. When the bandages fall, a part of her is relieved. At least, she thinks, I will no longer be bullied for my looks. She looks almost indigenous, the elders nodded.

Her mother weeps at the sight, fingers trembling against Rávdná's altered face. "Lille min, you look so..." "Please mum, don't make this harder than it has to be. I am one of them now." Rávdná interrupts, in a mix of Russian and Sami syllables. She gestures to the reindeer herd outside, their breath fogging the twilight. "This is what upper class looks like now."

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When the Americans take over Greenland, an agreement is reached with the locals. Denmark, Denmark—once the colonizer, now the colonized, officially a buffer state between the American and the Russian areas, is gifted to the Greenlandic people as a *gesture of goodwill*. Greenlandic, or Kalaallisuut pours into schoolchildren's skulls via cognitive purges, Danish memories excised like tumors, replaced by throaty glottal stops. The Greenlandic national dresses, the Kalaallisuut, become the only outfits permissible in public.

Hannah, now named Pilunnguaq, is less receptive to the changes than the average Danish girl. She joins the resistance, hoards Danish children's books under her mattress, dresses differently. Foolish, this pantomime of defiance. The algorithms find her. Always does.

They take her to the gene-editing spire, courtesy of Russia's main ally: China. Technicians in fur-lined lab coats greet her with smiles. "*An honor,*" they murmur as the restraints click into place. "*You're becoming part of something greater.*" Viral vectors rewrote her DNA and features: altered zygomatic arches, wider nostrils, melanin blooming like oil spill across her skin and hair follicles.



When the mirrors slide forward, the face staring back is a stranger's.

"Kiinaga!" Pilunnguaq screams, fingers clawing at the stranger's Inuit angles. "My cheekbones! My nose! I look like an Inuit woman! What have you done to me?" she asks, mourning the loss of her innocent features.

She is released into the new world, her body a masterpiece of ethnic reassignment.

She can now hope for a better life, looking like the silent minority dominating Danish society, but her accented Kalaallisut betrays her. The *real* Greenlanders sniff it out immediately.

"Say *qimmeq*," they taunt. "Go on, *Daneface*, say it!". She stumbles over the *q*, and they howl with laughter.

Eventually, something clicks. She adapts to her new role and culture. They eventually promote her to "Cultural Liaison." She tours the re-education centers, a living exhibit of progress. In a school in Copenhagen, she cups the face of a sobbing Danish girl. "*Shh. I screamed too. Look at me now.*"

BRAND NEW WORLD - ARAB SPAIN





Spain takes a very different route. After the Russians intervened to defend Greece and the Americans secured Sicily from Arab expansionism, the Saudis, leveraging their oil wealth and strategic alliances, carve a neo-Caliphate in Spain and Portugal. The ghost of Al-Andalus is resurrected not through conquest, but through backroom bargains, its legacy weaponized to justify a "cultural reclamation." Mosques once silenced by Reconquista bells now echo with Arabic prayers.

Under Saudi governance, the new regime maintains a tiered society. Christians are allowed to keep their faith, but as second-class citizens. Echoing the old jizya tax, the system is modernized into subtle, structural limitations. Public transportation, for example, features two subscription tiers: Muslim citizens have access to first-class cabins with air conditioning and full amenities, while non-Muslims are restricted to second-class compartments, often lacking AC and modern comforts.

In some public spaces, modesty regulations apply to everyone. On the Costa del Sol, surveillance drones hover like mechanized wasps enforcing modesty edicts. Eva tugs at her burkini's chlorine-stiffened fabric wondering how is she supposed to get tanned these days.



Higher education is also divided. Universities maintain dual tracks with significantly fewer spots available to non-Muslims, especially women. Over time, these disparities lead to widespread spontaneous conversions, not always out of belief, but out of necessity.

Here we see Cristina, now known as Karima Al-Qurtubiyya, attending the official ceremony in the Alhambra marking her conversion and adoption of the new customs. With her new status come new rights and new expectations. She's now eligible to enroll in the pharmacy program she had long dreamed of, but under the new moral code, she'll have to wait until marriage for sex. College, it seems, will be a very different experience than the one she once envisioned. The university's "moral guardians" patrol lecture halls, segregating genders and erasing Spain's legacy.

Late at night, she sometimes scrolls through deleted Instagram posts—tank tops, tapas, her ex boyfriend.

Months go by, then one full year since her conversion. She sometimes wonders whether she did the right thing. Karima briefly considers apostasy once—not out of rebellion, but from a flicker of her old self resurfacing. But she knows better.



The AI algorithm, named Huriya, knows everything. It tracks her thoughts, or at least her behaviors close enough to guess them. She glances at the time. Almost Iftar, the meal that ends the fast. Finally. Her throat is dry, her stomach growling, her body warm from the thirst. But there's no way to cheat. An electronic bracelet, mandatory for new converts, monitors her vitals during Ramadan, flagging any irregularities that might suggest she isn't fasting properly. A precaution, they said. A guidance. It also vibrates during prayer times.

She lays out a small plate of dates. These are the new staple fruit of Spain, its famous vineyards long since uprooted and repurposed into sprawling date plantations under the guidance of Saudi agronomists.

"Bismillah" - she murmurs when the muezzin sings, and eats the dates. The sweetness settles on her tongue, endorphins flowing in her blood. She savors them, hating their sweetness, even as her body betrays her with gratitude. Surprisingly, she is starting to develop a taste for them. Nothing beats the taste of the first food after fasting. She sips some water, slowly at first, and lays out the rest of the food she has been cooking, a blend of tortillas, seafood and couscous.



Later, as she walks down the stone-paved streets of the new capital Cordoba, she notices the presence of visiting Arab delegates. They are the last exponents of Saudi Arabia's old conservative guard, relics spat out by the kingdom's now secular, female-dominated society. Al-Andalus has become their refuge, their playground. They rarely mingle, but their presence is unmistakable—flowing white robes, well-groomed beards, and quiet entourages that glide beside them like shadows. They hold the levers of wealth and authority in the colony.

She thinks about her ex-boyfriend Rafa, or whatever his name is now, vanished into Andalusia's underground seminaries. His last photo showed him with a long beard, immersed in Quranic studies. He couldn't grow more than a wispy goatee but a new genetic treatment helped him. To marry, men must now master 15 surahs and grow a full beard; women need only six, provided their fertility scans are positive. The imbalance leaves a lot of "bridal candidates" in university halls.

Karima instinctively lowers her gaze, cheeks warming. Her thoughts drift, uninvited. She wonders what it would be like to raise a child with one of them—to belong fully, to be chosen. To rise in social status.

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She catches her reflection in a boutique window. Behind it, mannequins draped in abayas of liquid silver and midnight chiffon pose where ZARA's mannequins once slouched in denim. She pauses, drawn to the elegance of the abayas.

"Dress for the position you want, not the one you have." The phrase echoes in her mind. Karima steps inside.

She tries on a luxurious and elegant black velvet abaya cape with intricate gold embroidery across the upper chest, shoulders, and down the arms, giving the piece a regal, ornate appearance

The price tag stings: 600 Riyals.

But she breathes in, smiles faintly at her reflection, and tells herself: "It's a good investment." Outside, she clutches the bag like a shield. A delegate's child races past, laughing, a drone-toy buzzing at his heels.

The sun dips, casting the Alcázar's walls in blood-orange light. Somewhere, Rafa memorizes another verse.

Meanwhile, the situation within Saudi Arabia has undergone a complete reversal.

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Not everyone resists the new order. Some find faster, more advantageous ways out of their former lives. Marta, for example. Small-town Spain suffocated her; the new Saudi order, for all its controversies, offers something irresistible: a way out.

She has never been a looker. Her hair, a natural chestnut cascade of soft curls, frames a face that rarely sought attention—but her intelligence makes her unforgettable. She wears modest, flowing clothes not out of duty but preference, the kind that said: *leave me alone, I'm thinking*.

She has always been the type to disappear into books: Cervantes, García Lorca, as well as medieval Andalusí verses and Arabic poetry.

Her brilliant mind eventually makes mastering Arab an easy task, something highly valued by authorities, and eventually, her profile does not go unnoticed.

When the call from her supervisor comes, Marta doesn't expect anything life-altering, maybe a modest scholarship, a summer placement, some footnote recognition.



Still, she prepares carefully: her best embroidered abaya and a touch of discreet makeup.

She quickly understands this is no ordinary scholarship. They offer her a full ride to one of the elite Saudi integration colleges—the kind whispered about on forums and debated on late-night talk shows. Fast-track citizenship.

Officially, Ethnic Reassignment Surgery (ERS) is optional. But the unspoken truth hums beneath every glossy brochure: to become one of us, you must first look the part. Dark-skinned candidates from southern Spain often receive waivers since many can pass as Arab with only minor tweaks. But Marta, with her wide-set green eyes, chestnut curls, and pale, creamy skin, doesn't stand a chance of blending in naturally. Worse still, her looks, pleasant but plain, fall well below the Saudi aesthetic median.

She is scared. Of losing her identity. Of losing control. But even as dread curls in her stomach, another feeling quietly blooms: longing.

A small, shimmering fantasy she's never dared articulate, to be one of those impossibly beautiful, poised, confident Arab women. Becoming one of *them* have always felt like a dream. Now it's only a signature away.

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When Marta, now Mariam Al-Nazari, awakes from the surgery, weeks have passed. The clinic prefers that candidates wake up fully healed. The mirror should be the first step in reorientation.

Still, when her mother is allowed in, she stands frozen, her eyes glistening. "Mama..." Marta whispers. "Is it bad?" Her mother weeps silently and shakes her head. "No, no... You're beautiful, hija. It's just... you don't look like my child anymore." Marta turns her head slowly toward the mirror. "Ohh... my eyes... I look like another person." But the unspoken question lingers, is that really a bad thing?

She sees a woman with sharper cheekbones, fuller lips, and a waist-to-hip ratio calibrated to Saudi beauty algorithms. Her skin has been darkened just enough to climb the region's racial hierarchies, her once-wide green eyes have been recolored to a deep, warm brown, nearly black when not caught in direct light. Her hair, now permanently black, have acquired a distinct, new aroma. Her makeup is immaculate. Her nails are long, and glassy pink, catching the soft light when her fingers tremble. Every detail has been engineered not to shock, but to present the new identity as a gift.

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Jeddah welcomes her not as a foreigner, but as a prodigal daughter. Her old life, cramped apartment, second-hand textbooks, traditional parents, feels like someone else's memory.

At first, guilt flickers. Nights spent scrolling through old photos, wondering if her grandparents would even recognize her now. But then the parties change her mind: penthouse terraces where champagne flows like water, where Saudi heiresses murmur *"You're so brave"* and their brothers hit on her. It's a completely new world for a shy, insecure girl from the Spanish countryside, but she learns to love it.

Why mourn a Spain that had never truly valued her, when Riyadh's neon skyline welcomes her like that?

By month six, her Instagram profile has 200K followers. By year two, she has fully become a model, a fixture at Jeddah Fashion Week, where her allure is branded as *"the new Saudi face"*.

Not every woman needs to fight the system.

Some simply learn to wear it better.

But beneath the fillers and filters, a ghost sometimes reemerges, a pale girl who once loved words more than popularity, and then Mariam weeps silently.

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And yet, while Spain might be politically subjugated, its aesthetics are adored and became all the rage in Riyadh and Jeddah. Saudi women take flamenco classes after work, learning the dance, snapping open lace fans, closing the dancing session toasting one another with glasses of rare aged Rioja. Tapas bars in the meanwhile flourish across the Gulf.

Much like how Greek culture flourished in Rome after the Greek world was conquered, Spain becomes both a colony and a cultural reference. The Saudi empire dominates politically but surrenders, with surprising delight, to the subtle elegance and lifestyle of its new possession.

At the vanguard struts Dana Al-Fayez, Minister for Colonial Affairs, a leading symbol of the new Saudi identity: female, liberal, cosmopolitan, and unashamedly seductive. She's among the first to unapologetically embrace post-conquest Iberian flair, appearing at every public occasion in flamenco-inspired ensembles, a calculated performance of cultural openness and elegance.



Dana often visits Spain, here she stands beneath the soft lights of the press conference room in New Seville. Cameras flash. She leans into the microphone with practiced calm, her flamenco-inspired crimson latex dress catching the light with every subtle movement.

"We respect Spanish culture and we believe in mutual growth. Of course, our new citizens must understand our traditions before they can fully embrace freedom, but there is a path to Saudi citizenship, through dignity, obedience, and personal change."

A few murmurs rise from the press pool. One journalist raises a question about her attire.

Dana arches a perfectly shaped brow.

"Ah," she purrs. "The classic chauvinistic European male obsessed with women's clothing. How typically retrograde." A ripple of laughter, thin and sarcastic. "But surely we've moved past judging leaders by their outfits? Or does the press here still lives in the 20th century?"

The journalist's face reddens. He knows perfectly well his career is over.

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Minister Dana Al-Fayez's visit unfolds like a staged theatre production, tense, extravagant, and thick with symbolism. Minister Dana Al-Fayez, draped in her signature flamenco-inspired ensemble steps out of her armored motorcade into the heart of Seville. Cameras swarm. Drones hum overhead. The crowd parts like water around her.

Her outfit is a provocation disguised as homage. To the locals, it stings: the victor playing dress-up in the vanquished's skin. Spanish women haven't dressed like that in a long time. She's the cultural equivalent of a wealthy British woman donning tribal African dress for a photoshoot.

To many, she embodies the archetype of the liberated, bossy Arab woman, both admired and resented. Traditional mothers shield their children's eyes, muttering prayers under their breath, afraid her unapologetic glamour might corrupt the next generation. Young men, meanwhile, try to take a peek of her - not many women dress that scantily these days. A young, shy girl in a government-mandated hijab stares, transfixed. Dana catches her eye and winks. She sees the envy, the hope in her eyes. Another seed has been planted.

BRAND NEW WORLD - AMERICANIZED ITALY





In the meanwhile, American influence begins to reshape other corners of Europe. When Martina Bardi, a soft-spoken Tuscan – elegant, cultured, into horse-riding and violin recitals – is selected for the first round of the American Reconciliation Bureau’s prestigious *Language Enrichment Initiative*, her family beams with pride. Heiress to a respectable upper-middle-class with ancient aristocratic lineage, she’s seen as the perfect candidate for a touch of global refinement. “A few months in the States will give her the polish she needs,” her mother says. They picture martini hours in Manhattan, light jogs through Central Park, a delicate East Coast accent. Martina blushes at the thought. Then she gets her placement letter.

Not Princeton. Not the Upper West Side. Bayonne. New Jersey. Bayonne smells like asphalt and hairspray. Her assigned dorm is above a nail salon.

Her English improves, technically. But soon, it’s laced with the throaty swagger of the Jersey Shore. Vowels stretch. Sentences shrink. “Ciao” is replaced by “Wassup, bitch?” The Bureau’s “Phonetic Reconditioning Officers” blast endless loops of *Jersey Shore: Family Vacation*, drilling American diphthongs into her throat. “They say I’m progressing fast. I guess this is how real Americans talk?” - she tells her family in a video call.



A steady succession of Bureau-sanctioned “glow-ups” begins reshaping her appearance. “You don’t quite *look* Italian, we’ll fix that.” one stylist says, brushing her hair. “Hey, what does it mean? Youse guys gotta stop with this” she protests, struggling in her reshaped accent. “I’m no Sicilian.”

“Honey, you’re Italian, right?” one of the stylists chirps. “Time to look more like that. Think The Jersey shore. That’s what you are now.” Martina cringes. But she can’t stop them.

They bleach her teeth. Bronze her skin with tanning sessions combined with melanotan. Her dark-blonde mane is dyed dark brown. Her light green eyes are replaced with fused contact implants in warm, “natural” brown. Her delicate Tuscan features are overrun by contouring and heavy eyeliner. She looks a lot more exotic.

As the weeks go by, video calls with her family grow increasingly infrequent. It becomes harder to hide the changes – filters can only do so much, and brighter lighting only emphasizes the new undertones in her skin. Her Italian, once precise and melodic, now spills out tangled with English phrases. “*Tipo, I was literally dying,*” she says without thinking – and her mother winces.

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It's soon time for the "Mid-Program Showcase" gala in New York: a sleek, star-spangled spectacle meant to dazzle donors and diplomats, featuring hand-picked participants from across Europe.

Martina is handed her outfit without comment: a sequined bodycon dress in full U.S. flag print, stars glinting across her chest, red-and-white stripes hugging every curve. A rhinestone belt spells out USA in bold, unapologetic letters. Matching bangles, plastic heels, and dangling star earrings complete the look. And she's not the only one.

At the gala, all the girls look *off*. *Overdressed, overdone, over-Americanized*. She feels like a walking cliché, but she has no choice. She also notices she's darker skinned than anybody else.

When it's her turn to speak, she recites her memorized speech, her voice dripping with a honeyed drawl: "Hey y'all, I'm Marti. I was, like, all shy and stuff when I got here? Now I got friends, a glow-up, and a banging new accent. I'm basically fluent. Go USA!"

The speaker steps up. "Martina shows how American values can help even our oldest allies modernize." - the speaker says.

They all clink glasses. Martina's reflection glares back from the sticky bar top, a stranger wearing her face.



Across the room, someone waves at her with a candy stick. A bleach-blonde in a knotted crop top. It takes a second, then—
Angela.

She recognizes the German equestrian who once beat her by two points in Florence. Now she looks like she's cosplaying a 2007 Lindsay Lohan, her ash-brown hair bleached peroxide blonde, her blouse tied up to show midriff, chewing on a candy stick.

"Holy shit, girl—they made you a whole-ass cheerleader!"

Angela grins, popping her gum. *"And you into a Jersey Shore reboot. Crazy, right?"* They laugh – loud, sharp.

They trade stories. Angela's in Minnesota now, land of frozen lakes. *"You gotta visit,"* she insists, slurping her candy stick. *"I'll come to Jersey next week. See what else they've done to you."*

Martina forces a smirk. *"Ugh. Bring a freakin' puke bag, babe."*

But the event in New York doesn't stop there. Martina is summoned for "a midterm check." Mandatory, they say. She expects questions about performance, pronunciation drills, maybe even a language test. But the session turns out different. Almost entirely focused on her look and her voice.



The summons comes via text - a winking emoji followed by: "Time for your glow-up check! <3 Skin Tight Lounge @ 3PM. Mandatory." Martina stares at the message. Her stomach drops. The salon is majestic and smells of burnt hair and artificial peaches. At Skin Tight Lounge, the beautician doesn't even ask what she wants. She snaps her gum and says: "We're goin' full Brooklyn on you, baby. Juicy lips, sharp contour, and that dangerous glow."

"Yo wait" - but it's too late. A white-hot sting, then the sickening swell of collagen flooding her mouth. "Gotta keep 'em kissable, honey," the beautician says. Her first permanent alteration: lips plumping to obscene proportions. Some botox is added to her fresh face. They force loop earrings through her lobes - "*Bigger the hoops, hotter the bitch*" - and shove her into a skintight leopard print dress that clings to every curve. "This style will work better for you from now on."

The stylist steps back, chewing her gum triumphantly: "*Damn, girl*". "You're a whole meal." Martina stares at her reflection, speechless. She looks like a parody of herself. A classic New Jersey babe.



Martina stumbles into the street, her new earrings swinging like nooses. She touches her new face. It's warm. Plastic. Her lips stuck in a forced pout, like she's always about to blow a kiss she never meant. Fuck. This is so messed up, she tells herself. How is she supposed to explain this? To her family. Her friends. Even Angela. People are staring. Men with lust, women with judgement. She's embarrassed but her facial expression are frozen by the botox in a resting bitch face.

"One freakin' thing at a time. - she tells herself - I still got a few weeks 'til I fly back to Italy. Maybe the swelling chills by then."

But it does not. To top it off, as weeks progress, it's her once-lithe, equestrian frame that begins to change, quietly but steadily.

"Eat like one of us," her dietician says, handing her trays of burgers, bagels, and syrup-drenched lattes.

The food is greasy. The weight comes fast. But it settles perfectly—thanks to the Bureau's "nutritional supplements."

Her hips bloom. Her thighs thicken. Her breasts swell like her body's trying to catch up to the personality they scripted for her.

She's twenty-two. She thought she was done developing. But apparently not.



She decides to meet Angela at a local dive bar, the kind with flickering neon and vinyl stools that stick to your thighs.

Martina slides onto one. The pleather groans under her weight. She checks the time. Martina's flight got delayed slightly.

A man at the counter stares—his gaze lingering too long on her plumped lips and the tanned cleavage swelling from her leopard print dress.

"The fuck you lookin' at, huh?" Martina snarls, her new attitude overriding her old, polite self.

He blinks. "Nothin', Gabagool."

Her Bureau-issued brown eyes roll hard. *Gabagool*. Reduced to a *Sopranos* punchline. Like she's some Guidette from Staten Island. She looks down at herself. She is 100% a Guidette. "Christ. They really Jersey Shore'd my ass."

She signals the bartender, manicured nails tapping the wood. "Yo—gimme another tequila."

As she drinks the shot, she contemplates on how much her life has changed recently. She feels like the changes have been accelerating rather than slowing down. And her mind also feels different, slower.



Angela arrives. The look they exchange says more than words. She's changed too—her once-athletic frame now *curated*—hips wider, lips glossed, a crop top straining over newly *optimized* abs. And her breasts also look dramatically bigger. She struggles sitting comfortably on the bar chairs.

"I'll never ride competitively again," Angela mutters, picking at the seam of her crop top.

"Same here, look at my fat ass!" Martina sighs, then glances down at the tight leopard print strangling her curves.

"But... Ain't like we can't ride somethin' else, right?"

They both smirk.

A guy in a wifebeater and gel-slicked hair exhales a cigarette stream. Muscular. Smirking. *Kinda cute*, she lies to herself. She just needs a night of fun to forget everything else.

"Yo, Angie," she whispers, her courage rising. "You ever... y'know. Done a threesome?"

Angela chokes on her drink. "What, like—right now?"

Martina's already signaling the guy, her smile all teeth.



It's soon time for midterms. The questions are multiple-choice bubbles waiting to be filled with the *right* answers.

Who was the first President of the United States? "Easy."

Name three Founding Fathers. "Simple."

Describe life in a Wild West village. "I can do this."

But then—

Translate this passage from Ovid's Metamorphoses. Her stomach drops. The Latin script might as well be hieroglyphics.

Compare the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Her mind blanks. She can recite every line of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, but Philosophy? *Gone.*

When the scores come back, she braces for failure. Instead, the examiner beams. "*Congratulations! You're in the 80th percentile!*"

Martina blinks. "But... I didn't even finish the classics section."

The examiner waves a hand. "Oh, honey, that part's just for show. Look at your report!" Patriotism: *Exemplary.* Assimilation Progress: *A+.* Marketability: *Off the charts.* Martina's chest tightens. She *failed—actually failed—and yet here she is, perfect.* Exactly as they'd designed her to be.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Martina decides to treat herself to a visit at the hair salon. Her lighter highlights, kissed in by the sun, have started to peek through. But she's grown fond of the tar-black shade now. She settles into the chair, flipping through a *People* magazine—*Brad Pitt's Latest Divorce!*—as the stylist coos over her sun-streaked highlights.

Unbeknownst to her, the hair steamer is paired with a device altering her brain behaviors. It's Bureau-enhanced—quietly humming as its vents release a soft, candy-scented vapor into the air. She doesn't notice.

She nods along to the stylist's chatter, flipping pages. Where's she from? The name of her village slips out of reach like a dream fragment. Somewhere in Italy.

Favorite recipe? Just "that pasta thing we used to make."

But she can name every Avenger.

She hums *Hotline Bling* without knowing why.

The word "*McFlurry*" makes her smile with a fuzzy, misplaced nostalgia.

Stepping outside, Martina blinks at her reflection—lighter, brighter, *softer*. She feels... good. *Better*. Like she's home.



Martina's return to Italy is a bureaucratic disaster. At passport control, the agent squints at her photo, then at her face—now deep-tanned, lip-heavy, and practically vacuum-sealed into a leopard print dress. He calls a supervisor.

"It's... Sono io, okay?" she insists, pouting automatically.
"Martina freakin' Bardi"

They don't believe her. Her Italian sounds rusty,

It takes a call from the U.S. ambassador and a brand-new green card to push her through. It says Gio DeMarco, her new name.

Her family is waiting outside. When they see her, they freeze. She looks completely different, sounds like an airhead and behaves like a drama queen. Her mother gasps. "Martina...?" But she doesn't hug them. She air-kisses. She poses. "Call me Gio!"

She deserts the Vivaldi concert they'd planned months in advance. "Nah, too uptight for me. Total snoozefest. I prefer Ariana Grande now." she says, tugging at her strap. Instead, she spends the day sunbathing in Forte dei Marmi with local influencers and B-list reality stars. A paparazzo takes her photo. She likes the way the light hits her gloss. That night, her cousins debrief among themselves. The boys can't stop staring. The girls Google the *Language Enrichment Initiative* under their bedsheets.



It is only a matter of time before a scout from *Vogue Italia* spots her. *Perfection*, he thinks. Not just Americanized—*hyper-Americanized*. Like someone took the Jersey Shore aesthetic and filtered it through a Kardashian fever dream. A walking billboard for some strange, new femininity. Airbrushed by reality itself.

Two weeks later, her face is on the cover.

VOGUE ITALIA | LA NUOVA BELLEZZA

The tagline reads: "From Siena to Staten Island"

Inside, the spread is pure performance.

Gio draped over a baroque chaise in six-inch heels.

Gio licking gelato in a flag-print bikini.

The article praises her "transcultural appeal" and "post-global look." It calls her body "a site of aesthetic diplomacy."

No one mentions the Bureau. Or the reconditioning. Or the supplements that reshaped her from the inside out.

Instead, she's framed as *aspirational*.

A symbol of cooperation. And across Italy, a new batch of girls submits their applications.

BRAND NEW WORLD



When Gio returns to the U.S., she's greeted not by textbooks but by a *training schedule*. "*Phase One complete*," her new orientation packet reads.

"Time to focus on aesthetics."

She is told her language classes are suspended—her accent, cadence, and slang are already Bureau-certified. She's told that, given her recent modeling breakthrough, her next priority is visual optimization. "Think Instagram baddie," the instructor says.

Her new curriculum includes resistance bands, booty-day circuits, stairmaster intervals, and protein-shake regimen tailored to "optimal curvature."

Glute activation becomes the priority. Her thighs thicken. Her glutes swell, firm and lifted, just enough to meet the Bureau's biometric silhouette template.

By week three, her squat form is flawless. Her leggings gleam under gym lights. Even her sweat seems photogenic—like everything else now. A Bureau photographer drops by during a session, capturing her mid-rep with a kettlebell in hand. Within hours, the image hits socials under the Bureau's new tag: #AlliesLookLikeThis.



Tanning sessions become part of her schedule too. Every day after training, she's ushered into the booth—bronzing oil applied, timer set. But that's not all.

By week five, she's flying to Miami every weekend for "*natural sunlight reinforcement*." The Bureau books the flights, the hotel, the filtered beach selfies. Her skin darkens beautifully.

At first, it made her uneasy. Now she loves it. She loves looking more and more like a man's wet dream and less like herself. More like Gio, less like Martina.

The shade. The attention. People stare. People compliment. Men offer drinks. Girls whisper.

She's not just *beautiful* now. She's *hot*.

A few months later, on a Tuesday with no meetings scheduled, she gets a cheerful message from her Bureau app.

You've earned a complimentary salon visit!
Refresh your glow. Boost your confidence. 3PM.



She shows up expecting highlights or maybe another lip touch-up. Instead, it's a cosmetic surgery clinic. She's pressured into signing for breast augmentation. "*Standard enhancement – included in your program benefits,*" they chirp. She hesitates. "*Fake boobs?*" she whispers. She's changed so much already. Her reflection barely belongs to her. "Think of it as civic duty," croons the surgeon. "One last effort to get your green card!" She doesn't fight it anymore. What's the point? And a green card? That means this sparkly, absurd, intoxicating life could go on. No return flight. No small-town Italy.

Recovery is slow. Painful. But when the bandages come off she gasps. Her chest is rounder, higher. Her hands trace the foreign curves. A giddy laugh bubbles up.

"*Jesus Christ, I ain't never* looked this hot." - she murmurs. She poses for a mirror selfie.

When it's time for her ID photo, she picks out a leopard-print dress that clings to her curves. The neckline dips dangerously. Her tan, her face, her body none of it was familiar anymore. The card reads: Gio DeMarco.

She smiles like the name has always been hers.

BRAND NEW WORLD - RUSSIFIED POLAND





Wiktoria Kowalska has long been the spark of the resistance: a sharp-eyed, razor-tongued trained lawyer from Poland, she fought the regime in courtrooms and alleys alike. Then the trap closed on her. She could still see the mole's smug face as the Russians kicked down the safehouse door.

Now, handcuffed to a column, she stares up to the officer across from her.

"What will you do to me?" she asks, voice tight. "I won't talk. I won't give you names."

He chuckles. "We already have them." He pushes a folder across the table. Photos spill out: her comrades, their children, their addresses. "And you... you're famous. We can do better than torture you in a basement."

He turns to the guards. "Free her. We'll continue this talk somewhere else." They take her not to prison, but to a sleek apartment inside Russian headquarters.



"This could be yours," he says, lounging on the armrest like a friend. "No prison. No re-education camps. A salary, a good life."

"I'll never work for you." - she scoffs.

"Think about it" he says. "You sacrifice your name to save your friends. Nobody gets hurt. A win-win."

Her stomach turns. The contract lays open on the table. She scrolls through it until one clause gets her attention: *Voluntary Ethnic Reassignment*. She blinks. Cold creeps into her spine. "You're insane. What the hell will you turn me into?"

The officer lights a cigarette and smirks. "A better version. We want to make an example out of you"

She stares at the document for a few seconds. Then finally: "Okay, fine. I'll sign," Wiktorina says, her voice barely steady. "As long as my friends are safe, I'll go through with this humiliation."

The officer nods. "Wise choice." A camera is wheeled in. A script is handed to her—already printed, already approved.



"Please read the statement. We need to film this now, while you still look like yourself."

She swallows, then begins, eyes glazed. Her voice is flat, hollow—a ghost of the woman she was an hour ago:

"I, Wiktoria Kowalska, surrender voluntarily... to ensure the safety of my comrades. - A lie. They never gave me a choice, she thinks - I believe cooperation is the only path to peace. I place my future in the hands of our new leadership, for the unity of all Slavic people. My body and mind are now ready for rehabilitation. I am eager to be reborn."

The camera lingers on her face—the last flicker of defiance in her eyes before they wipe it all away. "Happy now?"

"Very." the officer says. As they lead her out, the officer taps the recording into a console. "*The world will see a traitor's redemption.* Somewhere, her friends will watch this. They'll believe she *chose* this. And soon—very soon—she might believe it too."

BRAND NEW WORLD



She is escorted down a sterile hallway. At the end, the automated closet. The door slides open, soundless.

"Goodbye, Wiktorija," the officer says, almost gently. "Think of it as a spa treatment. Or a trip to the beautician." She turns to face him. "Fuck you," she snaps. Then, quieter: "How much will I change?"

"Beyond recognition. And the best part is—we'll make everyone believe you *wanted* this."

The automated closet hums like a living thing. She steps inside. The door seals shut with a hiss.

A device shaped like a hair steamer starts working on her hair. Needles prick her scalp as nanobots get to work, rewriting her follicles strand by strand. Her black roots bleach to Barbie blonde in real time, each hair stitched with military precision.

In a matter of minutes, Wiktorija is a natural blonde.

"Get ready for blonde jokes, Wiktorija" - the officer says through a speaker.

BRAND NEW WORLD



She scoffs. “Really, do you think you’ll break my spirit with a hair dye?”

“Oh, this is just the beginning, my dear!”

The lasers start next. Twin beams lock onto her eyes. She flinches, but there's no room to move. Her green irises begin to pale—slowly, steadily—until they're drained of all warmth, replaced by icy blue.

A second device lowers, tracing her jawline. She feels heat. Pressure. The tightening of flesh as her bones are carved, re-angled. She bites down a scream. Another click. Another burn.

Bone stimulators press against her cheekbones, forcing them higher. Sharper. *Prettier*. The textbook Slavonic face—engineered to seduce, submit, and smile.

Her nose is next, shaved down, reshaped, softened. Made smaller. *Prettier*. The kind of nose that flatters any angle on camera.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Fat tissue is extracted from her face with a low hiss, vanishing from under her cheeks, along her jaw, beneath her chin. Her features sharpen. Her silhouette thins. She looks younger. Skinnier. Manufactured.

A mechanical arm lowers above her scalp.

Hair extensions slide seamlessly into place—platinum blonde, chemically glossed. Her sharp black bob, once a signature of resistance, is erased strand by strand.

What's left is long, flowing, feminine.

A layer of permanent makeup comes next. Winged eyeliner, etched into her skin. Soft blush, tattooed to her cheeks. She tries to speak. "Is this necessary?"

No one answers. The machine doesn't pause.

When the door hiss open, she flinches at her reflection. She looks like something off a recruitment billboard—feminine, plastic and obedient. A propaganda poster come to life.



Oh shit, she thinks, staring at the mirror. They really went full Russian Barbie on me.

“Hey, baby doll, how are you?” “I’m fine,” she replies. But the voice isn’t hers. It’s sweet. High-pitched. Featherlight. Too polished. “I still feel like myself,” she adds, almost convincing.

Not for long. The relief dies in the electroshock chair session that follows. She’s strapped in tight. The hum begins. Then the pulses. Pulses course through her skull as synapses collapse and rewire. Russian floods in, thick and absolute, drowning Polish in white noise. Folk songs she once knew by heart are overwritten with patriotic anthems. Moscow in winter. Orthodox Christmas. Her new memories feel warm, curated, strangely comforting.

A broken, conflicted Wiktorina reemerges from the long session. The last of her is still there—but now she’s mostly Russian. And she’s been implanted with something else too: a hunger to submit. It confuses her. Frightens her. It’s hard to separate from what’s been forced and what’s become *her*.



The next stop is a TV studio. A live feed to every screen in the Republic. This is the hardest part. “Wiktorija, your story has gone viral lately. It’s so great to have you here on the show!”

The audience claps. She looks around—blinking under the lights, stiff in a skintight gold dress that gleams like foil. She feels weak. Exposed. A mockery of the woman she used to be. But also—aroused. And ashamed of that, too.

“You look so different! Why the transformation?” She takes a breath. Her voice is soft, sweetened. Scripted. But not completely insincere. “Yeah... it’s true. I wanted to look more... Slavic and feminine. So far it’s just the face and the hair, but I’m hoping for more surgeries.”

“Also... I wanted to look different from my former self. That face belonged to a traitor. I don’t want to be recognized as her. I’m a new person now. Please, call me Natalia.” She turns to the camera with a practiced smile. “I love Russia. And I want to look Russian now.” The audience claps again, louder this time. “Wow. Amazing. So you *truly* love Russia now?”



Natalia crosses her legs, flicks her hair off her shoulder, confident. Her lips part into a coy grin.

"I joined the resistance because I was fighting my inner demons," she says into the lens, her tone now coated in submission.

"Deep down... even if I couldn't admit it to myself... I think I always wanted to surrender. To be reshaped. To be Russified." "I guess I just like to play hard to get. *Haha.*" - her name is ruined forever but she somehow rejoices in that humiliation.

Photoshoots follow. Billboards. Magazines. Tablet ads in government buildings. She's on the cover of Red Star Beauty, of course. Her name—Natalia Fyodorova—is printed in bold over glistening curves. "From Foe to Patriot," reads the headline.

In the fake interview, she reportedly says: "I dream of having many kids in the future," she says.

"But for now... I want to flaunt my figure!"



Eventually, Wiktoria Kowalska vanishes completely. Whatever she once was—lawyer, fighter, idealist, Polish—is dust now.

Natalia happily takes her place. And Natalia craves her new life. Her mind is now fully rewired: obedient, nationalistic, thirsting for approval and very hedonistic.

She genuinely begs for a boob job. A fundraiser helps her satisfy her wish. Lips filler follow. Not content with being a pretty Russian woman, she wants to become a trophy, a living doll. Her training routines shift too.

No more martial drills or power training. Those won't be needed anymore, she reflects.

Her workouts now revolve around glutes, waistline, posture. Flat stomach. Bubble butt. Everything engineered to appeal.

Then, she begins choosing her own looks. Dictating her image.

BRAND NEW WORLD



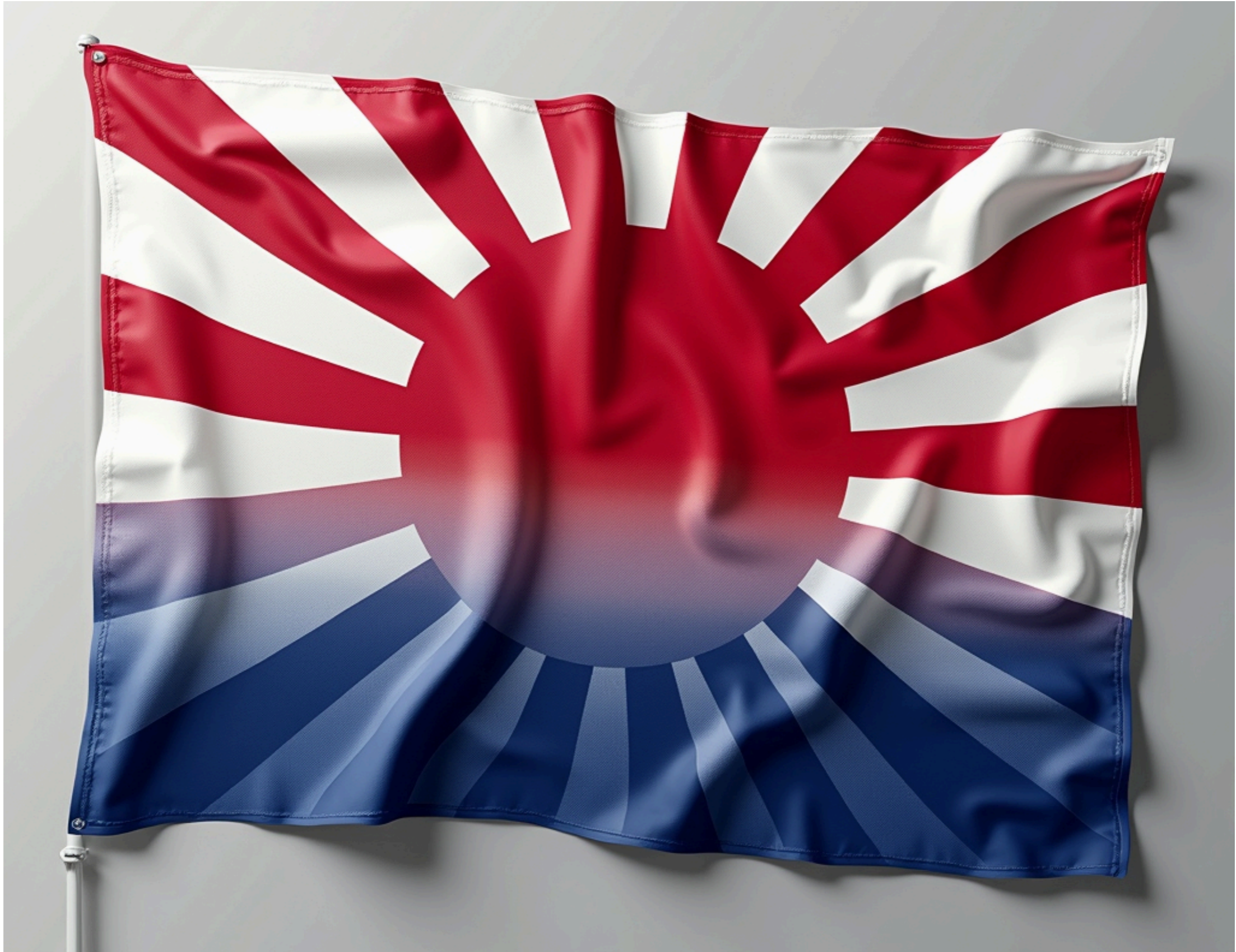
Confidence becomes her final reward.

She darkens her blonde – now she’s honey-toned. Warmer. Younger. More *credible*. She looks in the mirror and finally sees herself—and she approves.

She tours soldier camps to boost morale. She doesn’t mind the stares. Doesn’t mind sleeping with a few soldiers now and then, but it’s nothing serious. And then, one evening, beneath the dull hum of barracks lighting, she locks eyes with a young, handsome, low-ranking officer. He seems kind. Something clicks in her brain. She leans in. Smiles. Touches his collar. After a few dates, their connection grows stronger. “Wouldn’t that be poetic?” - she asks herself “Someone who used to fight for the resistance becoming the trophy wife of a Russian officer.” Even of made spicier by her submission kink, the attraction is genuine and, in a matter of a few months, the two are happily married.

And just like that, her arc completes.

BRAND NEW WORLD - JAPANIFIED NETHERLANDS



BRAND NEW WORLD



Femke de Vries never paid much attention to politics. Growing up in Haarlem, she had focused on volleyball, exam scores, and avoiding her older brother's rants about global instability. But when Japan annexes the Netherlands under the pretext of a "stabilizing protectorate," she realizes the world no longer made room for neutrality.

It starts with the reassignment letters. She is "selected for demographic integration," the paper read. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Failure to comply would result in housing and education reassignment.

She is taken by train to what used to be Utrecht—now rebranded Shinsei Zone 4. The processing facility resembles a hospital, if hospitals came with guards in white lacquered armor and no windows. A brief interview reveal her personality type. However, her physique does not match that.

BRAND NEW WORLD



The ideal woman is soft-voiced, slight, cute. Not a green-eyed, blonde, 178 cm volleyball player with sharp cheekbones and too much stride in her step.

They call her name. She steps forward. A woman in sterile pink gloves gestures gently, palm up. No words. Just precision.

Her clothes are taken. Every stitch. Folded neatly, tagged with a barcode, then placed in a clear drawer she knows she'll never open again. She stands naked for a moment in the white light—tall, pale, exposed.

Then the glass capsule opens with a hiss. She steps in. The glass seals shut.

Around her, rows of similar chambers hum quietly. Other Dutch girls—blonde, broad-shouldered, unmistakably northern—stand upright inside their own capsules. Some blink slowly. Most don't react.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Femke's own chest tightens, but her face stays still. She's learned by now that showing too much emotion gets flagged.

She's taken to a room where female Japanese technicians in tailored white lab coats sit behind touchscreens. None of them look up. No one greets her. One gestures toward a padded platform at the center. She complies. She's still taller than everyone in the room. For now.

Someone slides a finger across the parameters.

Her data loads on the wall:

NAME: Femke de Vries

ORIGIN: Utrecht Sector

HEIGHT: 178 cm → 163 cm (ADJUSTED)

The bones don't crack; they fold. A quiet implosion. Her legs compress, arms shorten, proportions shrinking inward as her center of gravity drops. Her hands—once broad, capable—are small, dainty. Her collarbones curve inward.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Her body feels suddenly very different. She immediately knows her volleyball skills are gone forever. Spikes, dives, the satisfying smack of palm against leather. Gone. She couldn't even reach the net now.

The platform adjusts to follow her new stance. She looks like a cuter, petite version of herself. Now she's on the short side in the room. A small sound escapes her throat.

A squeak.

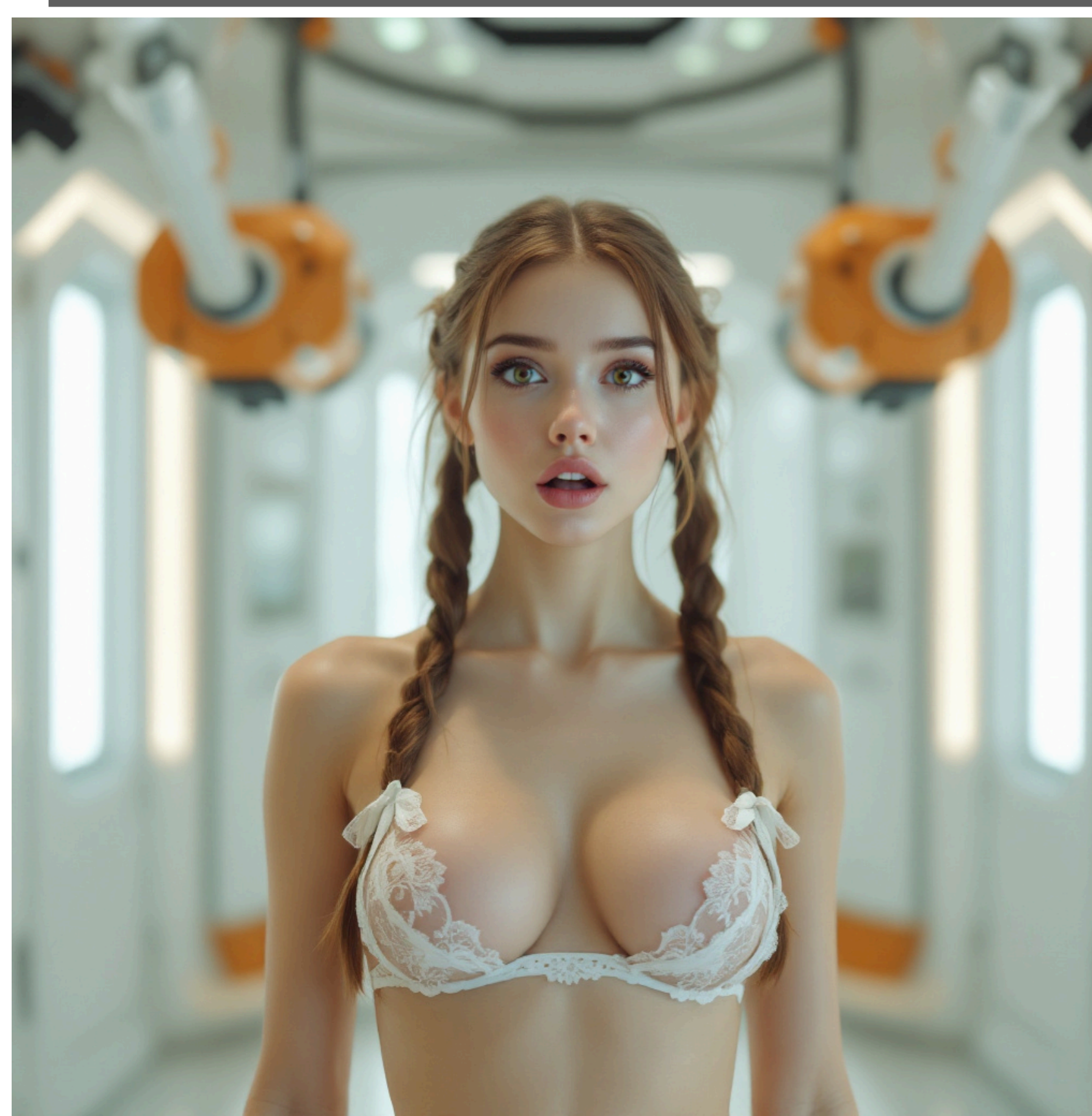
High-pitched, breathy, wrong.

Her voice—once low and androgynous, perfect for the harsh sounds of the Dutch language—is now sharp and melodic, laced with false sweetness. "Please stop" - she pleads in vain.

She's taken to a different room, struggling to find her balance on her shortened legs.

Her hair, still long and blonde, is slowly changed here.

BRAND NEW WORLD



A warm sensation spreads across her scalp.
A chemical scent.

Strands shift from pale gold to chestnut,
then deepen, brown, soft, with a smooth
shine.

Then, a soft sting behind her eyes.

She blinks. Green seeps into amber, amber
darkens—then holds. Hazel.

Facial calibration begins.

Her cheekbones narrow. Her jawline softens,
tapering into something delicate. The
bridge of her nose flattens, nostrils
reshaping. Her brow smooths, her forehead
subtly widening.

Her eyes sting again—their shape pulled
subtly, imperceptibly inward. Lids
restructured. Folds adjusted.

They are now almond-shaped, their color a
deep, velvety brown. Her hair turns even
darker, reaching a jet black color.



In the mirror, a young Japanese girl looks back.

Small face. Soft mouth. Round chin. Wide, gentle eyes. Shocked. Femke struggles to accept that this is the body she'll be stuck in for her new life. But it's not all.

But the worst is yet to come.

A laser pointed to her pupils until they reach her brain. Why waste years on re-education when nanobots rewrite a soul in seconds? Femke's personality, knowledge, language are instantly erased in a flash and replaced with a new persona.

A flash. A shudder. Femke de Vries dissolves. Memories unravel. Language bleeds away. Her self is formatted, replaced.

"Femke de Vries" – Status: Reprocessed
Assigned ID: Fumiko Aihara
Cultural Compliance: 97.4%
Release: Pending



A final offering waits on a nearby mannequin. A maid outfit.

Right, her summer job at the maid café! She'd been so thrilled when her application was accepted. She always wanted to work there! It was like a dream come true.

Fumiko grabs it without questions. Looking at the screens, she notices her name, Fumiko. She has no idea whatsoever who is Femke. How do you even pronounce that name? So foreign. Ugly.

She walks down the empty corridor, heading to the maid cafe where she works. Where is this place? A training center, maybe? A dormitory? It doesn't matter. She can't be late for her shift. Adjusting the maid headband, Fumiko steps into the sunlight, toward the café, toward her new life, toward the life she's always known.

Why does the back of her neck prickle? - she asks herself, adjusting her choker.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Maren was an ice hockey player—tall, broad-shouldered, blonde, her nose broken more than once and proud of it. Her wrists were taped more often than her nails. Her Instagram had one selfie and forty videos of slap shots.

Now, she's a Gyaru.

Her hair is still blonde—but only because she re-dyes it weekly, roots betraying the truth underneath. Her tan is deep and uniform, maintained obsessively through sprays and tanning bed sessions. Her top, a shimmery pastel bralette with a rhinestone flower at the center, reveals a waist too slim for anyone who once lived on energy bars and protein powder. Her nails are long, glossy. She wears platform heels she once laughed at.

And yet, beneath the glitter and neon, there's still that stare—cold, competitive, unreadable.

She just doesn't play hockey anymore.

BRAND NEW WORLD



Amalia was the head of her university's student association in Utrecht, studious, affable. She had short brown hair, blue eyes, a clean-faced girl. Despite that, she had always had low self-esteem.

Now, all of that is gone forever. She's a Yakuza wife. Rich, spoiled and controversial.

Her hair is long now—jet-black, straight, worn in a high, lacquered bun, her arms covered by full-sleeve tattoos, as are her shoulders and thighs. She absolutely loves her tats and is constantly dreaming about getting more. New regulations don't allow her to enter public swimming pools but she does not need that, given the villa she lives in.

Her eyes are black, almond-shaped and sensual. Her outfits are tight, shiny, unmistakably lewd. She doesn't speak Dutch anymore, only Japanese. Her college knowledge is gone entirely, but she doesn't need that anymore. She finally got the confidence she had always envied on other women.



Raised in a Lutheran family in Ede, in the Dutch Bible Belt, Anne Marie was once the kind of girl who whispered her prayers into hymnals and wore her hair in a tight bun every Sunday.

That girl is gone.

Now she answers to Hitomi Watanabe, a shrine maiden assigned to New Hokkaido Prefecture.

She stands in the corridor of the reeducation facility, smiling softly beneath fluorescent lights, dressed in crisp white and crimson robes. Her black hair is neatly tied with a red ribbon. Anne Marie would have found this extremely idolatrous. But Hitomi doesn't remember Anne Marie's opinions. She remembers instructions, ceremony steps. She no longer recites Psalms. She chants Norito, bows with precision, and keeps her brown eyes low in the presence of visiting elders. Her skin has paled. Her features have been softened, reshaped. Her voice is higher now, more melodic.

Once Japan was afraid of the influence Christian sets had in its territory. Now it's their turn to export their beliefs.