

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.

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Checking the smartphone gave her even more information: she had enrolled in a community and public health nursing bachelor's and worked in a nail manicurist to pay the bills. What a change for the ambitious law student!

She grabbed her smartphone and tried logging into her personal email, facebook profile or her college account but none of them existed.

As a last resort, she dialled her best friend Amy's number, which she knew by heart. The number still existed, apparently. Maybe there was still a glimpse of hope, she told herself. Amy picked up the call, her usual voice and intonation sounded so reassuring in the middle of this chaos! Clarissa tried without much success to sound like the white, educated girl she was until few minutes before: "Amy, lahsten! Aht' Clarahssa! I mean, Clarissa! I know I sound weird but ya 'as ta trust me! I 'as been changed ahnta a ebony gahr! I dunno what ta do!".

Amy sounded amused and surprised when she replied: "Haha, sure! I didn't know Clarissa was such a prankster! Anyway, whoever you are, tell her we should hang out more, she's always so busy studying recently...". And she reattached. Clarissa's heart sunk. If not even her best friend would believe her now, her old identity was effectively gone. As far as the outside world was concerned, she was Chantelle Jackson, in and out.

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"That's new!" - Amy thought with a smile after hanging up - "Clarissa pulling phone pranks! Well, I'm glad that she's having some fun sometimes, that girl is always studying so hard! She should have some fun too once in a while."

She went back to her business but that unusual phone call stayed in the back of her mind.

"Thinking about it again, that girl's voice sounded a bit distressed, I wonder if something is going on with her..." - she thought.

"Also, now that I'm thinking about it, Clarissa has hardly any Black friends. Maybe she's making new friends at college but it doesn't sound like her. Also, our college is not very diverse when it comes to ethnicities, I've barely met any Black students around." - she pondered.

"Well, anyway it's getting late now, I'll call her again tomorrow just to make sure everything is ok. It was probably just a silly prank."

As a freshman in college herself, there was a lot to figure out, from semester fees and rent to organising her study for the incoming midterms.

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A few hours later, Amy began undressing herself before going to bed when she noticed that her usually straight hair was curling up. At first she dismissed it and thought it was due to the humidity but the change didn't stop there.

At first it was just wavy, then it got curly and gained lots of volume, until it resembled an afro hairstyle, apart from the lighter color. The unusual feeling of kinky hair tickling her shoulders made her worry. She checked herself in a mirror and jumped from the shock. Her usual straight hair had turned into the untamed, kinky hair only women of African descent had. The change was too sudden and dramatic to be explained with humidity, moreover she had never had wavy hair before. She touched it, in utter disbelief. It felt so stiff and coarse! No amount of brushing could straighten it now.

Meanwhile, her average-coloured white skin also began changing, becoming tanned, almost a caramel color in hue. Her new skin color quickly spread to her torso, arms and face. She was no longer really white, now possibly Hispanic or mixed.

"Oh my God" - she screamed - "What's going on?"

"My hair, and then my skin! There must be a logical explanation to this!" - she thought, trying not to panic.

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Her untamed kinky hair then darkened to a full black, at first only the roots, then the jet-black pigment spread to her entire afro. At that point her face also began to shift.

Her hazel eyes suddenly darkened. The irises took on a deep brown hue as she watched, then darkened further reaching a pitch black hue at the end. Her pupils, widened by the emotion, were now indistinguishable from the black irises staring back in the mirror. "No! What's with my face now?" - she screamed.

Her cheeks burned slightly as they grew, altering her cheekbones and giving her an even more exotic appearance. Then her eyes widened as she saw her bottom lip bulging, slowly stretching out from her mouth. Her upper lip immediately followed, reaching the kissable, sensual plumpness of the mouths of African-American girls.

Amy was like in trance, unable to take her eyes off her changing reflection. She wondered whether she was hallucinating and, if not, if the changes were irreversible.

Finally, her eyes turned to her thin, pointy nose, which rounded on its edges and then pulled a bit flatter. As if an invisible hand was reshaping the cartilage, her nose got wider and flatter, and her nostrils became more prominent, flaring at each nervous inhale.

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As the changes slowed down and her appearance stabilised, Amy inspected her new looks in utter disbelief. She tried pulling her hair to find out that it was attached to her scalp. Her new nose and lips seemed also perfectly natural after a close inspection, as did the rest of her body. One doesn't turn Black just like that, right? How could that have happened? - Amy asked herself. The initial shock had made her forget about the phone call from her friend, but now she recalled it and made a connection.

"Shit, that must have been Clarissa at the phone earlier!" - she thought. Whatever had happened to her repeated just now.

Amy grabbed her phone, which had turned from her usual iPhone to a worn out Huawei with a trashy cover. Her contacts had changed too and the last phone call was marked with the name Chantelle but the number seemed to be Clarissa's.

She decided not to waste further time and called her friend, hoping to figure out what had happened to her body.

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Clarissa picked up the phone, and said "Sup babe?" Amy replied "Clarahssa, I belaeve ya! I'm a ebony gahrl too now!" - before realising that her voice had changed too, she had a huskier tone and a strong ghetto accent. "Oh mah God! You too! It's mah fault! I saahd some shit about dem black folks an dis happ'ned!"

"What? Dahs makes nah sense!" - Amy replied, struggling to understand what her friend meant.

Clarissa asked her friend to switch on the cameras. Amy reluctantly accepted. The two transformed girls stared each other for a few seconds without saying a word. A few hours before Amy would have never believed that the Black girl with lots and large hoop earrings looking at the camera was Clarissa but after what had happened to her, she had to believe her.

"Oh wow Clarissa, you has chaged so much!" - she said, shaken by the sudden transformation.

"You too babe! You make a pretty lahght-skahnnd ebony bitch! I'm kanda envahous!" - replied Clarissa, in a light-hearted tone that surprised Amy. "Anythahng else has chaged? Check ya doocuments!" "What does ya mea? Shaht! It says Alyssa Brown!" "I told ya! I'm Chantelle now! It looks lahke we're two ebony gahrlls now, Chantelle an' Alyssa!"