

A New You

by Sebastien Rocheleau

Dipping his hands into the soapy water, Larry starts scrubbing the glasses with the dish rag. Supper was late again tonight, his wife, Jane, has decided to wait for him to get back from work before they started. He takes a quick look back, watching her as she is busy clearing the table with the help of their two young boys. She's smiling, but he sees the slight creases in her forehead, the strained lines at the edges of her mouth.

"Hey kids, how about the two of you run off to play? You mom and I will take care of the rest."

A statement that did not need to be said twice. The older one, 6 years old in a few months, hurries off, laughing, pulling the younger one behind him. Larry then turns to face his wife.

"Everything alright?" he asks, his brows furrowed.

She lets out a small laugh, "Oh everything is fine, just fine. Just...well, you know that old hag at work, Mrs Cumberbund? Well, she'd been absent for a few days, everyone just thought she was sick. But she came in this morning and, well, she now looks like a model! Oh, you should have seen the looks all the customers were giving her, and that they give to all the others that have gone for the NewYou process..." she tries to give her husband a reassuring smile, but just doesn't seem able to manage it.

Grabbing the towel to dry off his hand, Larry takes a good look at his wife. She was beautiful, he had never once thought otherwise. But short, plump, someone who had given birth twice; there was no denying that she wasn't the sort who'd have a chance to make it in the modeling industry. They were just too narrowminded in what they thought of as desirable. Sighing, he hurries over to her, lovingly wrapping his arms around her, tenderly kissing her forehead.

"So you're telling me you want to go through this, because you want other men to look at you? I'm not sure I like that idea very much."

"No, that's not really it. It's more...I want to be beautiful, Larry! I know, I know I shouldn't be worrying about this so much. But it's always been this way: high school, university, I was never the one guys paid any attention to. I don't want to be ignored anymore."

She hugs him tighter, enjoying the comfort of his warmth. They stay embracing for several moments before Larry speaks up.

"Is this what you want?"

"I...I think it is."

Well, with all the work he had been doing lately, affording it certainly wasn't a problem.

"Then go for it," he says, smiling gently.

"You'll see, Larry, I'll come back so beautiful, it's like I'll be a new me."

Setting himself down on the couch, Larry sighed. He turns on the TV, and starts flipping through the channels. Not looking for anything specific, just taking a bit of time to try and relax before he heads to bed. The past two days, where he's had to take care of the boys himself in addition to working long hours, had left him exhausted. He couldn't wait for Jane to get back.

Looking around at the living room, at the pile of toys on the floor and the layer of dust starting to form on the stacks of Cosmopolitan, Glamour and Fashion magazines... he really wishes Jane would just hurry up and get back, keeping the house clean was just too much work for one person.

A commercial comes on, for the NewYou process. "...revolutionary new technology..."

His work had been pretty insane lately. His company had decided to begin expanding a few months ago, and right now was that awkward stage where they had the extra work that needed to get done, but they were still training the people to do it.

"...three day treatment, and then you're good to go..."

This meant that for the past several weeks, he has had to work late nights and early mornings. Sometimes he has even had to go in on the weekends, which he absolutely hates doing; that was time he wanted to spend with his family, not with his work.

"...take control of your looks: height, weight, breasts, face..."

Jane had been good about it. Normally they'd take turns making supper after they got home, or helping their older son with his homework. But since he'd been coming home so late, she had had to take on the larger share of the work. And that Chinese place must know how to get to their address by heart by now.

"...no longer just a good personality!"

Well, one more day and his wife would be back. And then a few more weeks, and he'd be able to stop working so much overtime. He'd just have to endure it until then.

"No, no, don't do that, you're going to get the flour eve..." too late. Larry holds back a sigh, the cloud of flour settling down everywhere means he can give up the idea of going to bed early.

He starts showing the kids how to mix the flour in with the liquids when the phone rings.

"Sorry kids, I'll be a moment," as he hurries to brush off his hands and pick up the phone.

"Hello?"

"Larry, you won't believe the new me, I look incredible! I'm just getting off the highway now, I'll be home soon, I'm so excited about showing you!"

"Hahaha, alright Jane, I'll see you soon." Hanging up, he turns to stare at the kitchen, and then at his two boys.

"Alright kids, mom is going to be home soon. Hurry upstairs and get cleaned up, before she gets here. And I'll try to clean up the kitchen a bit."

Screaming in eagerness, the two boys hurry upstairs to get cleaned up; Larry just hopes they don't make too much of a mess while doing it. He himself gets to work on the kitchen, cleaning up the table and the floor, and it's only a short while later when he hears the front door open.

"Larry, where are you?"

"I'm in the kitchen."

Larry puts aside the broom and watches with apprehension as his wife lets her purse drop the ground and hurries to him, eager to pounce on him.

“Don’t I look incredible? It’s just like I wanted!”

Larry takes a moment to look at his new tall, slim, tanned wife. It takes him a moment before he finds himself able to answer.

“You look...you look good,” he tells her, awkwardly wrapping his arms around her. She pulls back from him, frowning.

“Larry, what’s wrong?”

Before he has time to answer, though, little footsteps can be heard on the stairs. The two boys run down, the older one pulling his brother behind them. Slowing briefly when getting to the kitchen, their faces briefly knitting in confusion, they then shrug and hurry through to the front door.

“Come on, come on, mommy is going to be back home soon!” the older brother yells to his younger sibling, eagerly pushing his face against the window.