

Feminine Mystique

By Morpheus

Sighing, Randy Long looked at his reflection in the mirror. His friends Jimmy and Chip were standing inside his door, already in their costumes for the party, waiting on him. Unfortunately, Randy had been expecting to be working for the night and hadn't bothered to pick himself up a costume. Then just an hour ago, he'd gotten a call from his boss, saying not to bother showing up, and to enjoy himself. As he looked at his 6 foot, brown haired self in the mirror, dressed in his usual jeans and T Shirt, he wondered just how he could enjoy himself.

The party was a big one on campus, and wearing a costume was mandatory. "Sorry guys." Randy said reluctantly, "but I can't go." Randy looked at his friends enviously, thinking that at least they'd had time to get their costumes together. He couldn't help but chuckling at the costumes they'd chosen.

Jimmy, who was fairly tall and thin, with a mop of unruly red hair, was going dressed up as his favorite comic book character, Gambit. He was even waving around a couple playing cards and talking in a bad faked Cajun accent. Chip on the other hand was a bit shorter than Jimmy, but more muscular. Randy smiled at Chip's Wolverine costume, thinking that he was a bit too tall and not hairy enough to make it look good, but Chip didn't seem to care. And Randy had to laugh at the fake claws coming out of the gloves since Chip was stuck with them, getting in the way of everything.

And then again, Randy had nothing, but that didn't stop his friends from telling him to come anyway. "Common Randy, no one will care." Chip pleaded.

"Hurry up, or we'll miss the contest." Jimmy grumbled impatiently, looking at his watch.

Chip grinned, then held up his fake claws, demanding "You're coming with us Bub. Either the hard way or the easy way." Randy couldn't help but laugh at Chip. Maybe, he thought, It wouldn't hurt to show up. Still, he thought that it might be embarrassing to be the only person there without a costume. For the millionth time, he wished that he'd finished that Spider Man costume that he'd originally planned to wear. But after his boss had told him he'd be working, he'd given up on it. Sighing, Randy really wished his boss would have made up his mind earlier.

Looking over at his friends, Randy picked up some of the comic books he'd forgotten about, putting them on the coffee in a nice stack. For some reason, the back issue of X Factor caught his eye, and he really wished that they hadn't screwed that title up then canceled it. What a waste. Sighing again, Randy shrugged his shoulders, and said "All right, I'll go."

"About friggin time." Jimmy muttered, looking at his watch again. Chip just smiled and cracked open a beer, saying something about staying in character. Hesitating for just a moment, thinking that he'd made a mistake, Randy grabbed his jacket and hurried out the door with his friends.

Walking into the door, Randy looked around nervously at everyone in their costumes. As far as he could tell, everyone was in costume. Everyone but him that was. Turning a little, Randy noticed the four judges sitting at a table, watching the partygoers coming in, taking notes on their costumes.

Chuckling, Randy noted that they'd apparently learned after the accusations of sexism the year before, when the all male judges voted the head cheerleader the winner, in spite of her horrible costume. The only good thing about it was the amount of cleavage shown. This year though, only two of the judges were guys, with the other two being women. Randy could just imagine the arguments they'd have over who had the best costume, thankful at least that he certainly wouldn't qualify.

As Randy looked over the judges, he smiled to himself, recognizing the guy in the alien costume as Bill Walsh, whom he often ran into at the local comic shop. Randy smiled, kind of liking Bill since they had the same interest in comics. "Hey man..."Bill said, noticing Randy, "Cool you could make it." Then Bill hesitated. "Sorry man, but you gotta have a costume."

"Yeah, sure." Randy said, uncomfortably aware of Jimmy standing behind him still, though Chip had already gone in.

"Let me guess..." Bill said, smiling, "homicidal maniac. They look just like everybody else."

Randy had to laugh at that, trying to think quickly. "No," he said smiling, then leaned over and whispered to Bill as if he were sharing a great secret, "I'm really Mystique, the mutant terrorist, sometimes hero. I shape shifted myself into this disguise so that I could infiltrate this party."

Bill broke out laughing at that, with Jimmy chuckling along. Randy just smiled, pleased at himself. "All right,"Bill said, still chuckling, "you can go in." Surprised at actually being let in, Randy didn't stay around long enough for Bill to change his mind, hurrying into the main room.