

The Rose Gold Treatment: Coming soon

Amanda Hawkins

ROSE GOLD TREATMENT

Oh my god. Is that... is that really me?
Is that my hair? No way, it can't be.

Oh man, it is. I can feel it pulling on my scalp. How could they possibly do this? I guess my hair was pretty long for a guy, but it was straggly and dark brown and you could tell it belonged to a dude. But... this? This is one seriously feminine hairstyle. Uh no, it's not just feminine. This hair really belongs on a woman. Christ... what does that make me?

The Rose Gold treatment... that's what they did to me. It's all the rage, they said. Everyone's doing it. Uhm no, not everyone. Just women. Not many dudes wandering around with hair like this. What the hell am I supposed to do with it? I asked for something trendy, and I get this? Isn't it against the salon code of conduct, if there is such a thing, that stylists don't go to town on the poor schmuck who happens to fall asleep in the shampoo chair?

Geez... What the heck did they do to my face? No more stubble, no more wispy mustache... perfect complexion, nice neat eyebrows. I look like my sister, except she's got short hair. So... they gave me a facial, maybe some light makeup. But why? What the fuck are they up to?

We're back! It's time to finish the job. We're going to contour your face, accent those delightfully high cheekbones, thin out your jawline. Then it's a full-spectrum gender-flip with eye shadow, lipstick and mascara... the works! You're going to sashay out of here looking like a total babe. We'll even sneak you into the ladieswear shop next-door, so they can get you outfitted with some nice lingerie and a pretty dress, or maybe a stylish skirt-and-blouse combo. And don't you worry, your legs are gonna look fantastic 'cause we shaved 'em while you were asleep!

All right, it's official... they're insane. Total psychos. God knows what they'll do if I tell 'em to stick it up their derrières. Only one thing to do: go along with it until I get out of here. They said they'd let me leave once I was dressed, so how much worse could it get?

Here we go... I'll just pop these earbuds in, so you can listen to a little audio. The time will just fly by!

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As the time flew by, a voice droned in his ears...

“The transformation is real, completely real. You are a woman, a beautiful woman... You have always been a woman, on the inside. You know it is true. Your life as a man is over. Your face is feminine. You have a feminine face. Look deep into the mirror... the woman you see there is the woman you have become. She is you.

“Your transformation is the real deal. You enjoy wearing makeup. Wearing makeup makes you feel pretty. When you wear makeup, you feel pretty—because you are pretty. You have a feminine body. Your body is feminine. You are a beautiful woman, a beautiful woman. You have always been a woman, on the inside.

“Your life as a man is over. You have a female mind. Your mind is entirely female. You feel what a woman feels. You think what a woman thinks. You have a female mind. You have the mind of a woman. You have always been a woman, in your mind...”

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Jessica turned side-on to the mirror, admiring the sweep of her long skirt. It was a stylish pleated midi in dark blue that covered her knees but showed off her calves perfectly. She'd matched it with a striped shirt with three-quarter sleeves and classic taupe pumps for a look that was definitely suitable for the office. She just *knew* her parents would be so impressed that she was finally getting serious about finding a real job.

“It’s perfect... I don’t know *how* to thank you,” she told the watching circle of women. They included the girls from the salon and the store clerks who had helped her with the outfit.

“You’re quite welcome,” the older clerk said.

“All girls together,” said a stylist from the salon. “A year ago I was right where you are, princess. Newly cured of being a man—and glad of it.”

“What, really? You *so* can’t tell.” Jessica plucked at her skirt, trying to get it to hang just right. Having just discovered her womanhood, she had to make up for lost time. To be the girliest girl she could possibly be—nothing else mattered.

The younger clerk handed her a card, which she stuck in her purse with barely a glance. “That’s for the next meeting,” the woman said. “Time and place. The first hour is an informal reception; wine and cheese, that sort of thing. After that we get right down to business.”

“Mmm.” Jessica tugged on her shirt, the better to show off her lovely new bosom. “What business is that?”

The stylist laughed and folded her arms. “To take over the world, of course. But I’m not sure this one’s up to it.”

The senior clerk clucked at her. “Now, now. Play nice. You weren’t exactly brainiac on *your* first day. There’s always a zombie-like phase where they’re obsessed with their looks.”

“I wasn’t *that* bad... was I?”

“You couldn’t *wait* to raid your girlfriend’s closet. We had to keep you overnight, so you wouldn’t blow the operation.” The clerk turned to Jessica. “The plan is simple, my dear: to eradicate men from the face of the Earth. There will still be ‘males’ such as yourself, of course, so the human race won’t die out. Everything else will change for the better.”

“For the better,” Jessica repeated dreamily, tipping her head back. “Oh, that is *so* true.” Red-tipped fingers trailed through the mane of rose-gold hair tumbling over her shoulders. “If I’d known how wonderful this hair would look—how utterly scrumptious it would *feel*—I would’ve asked for it when I walked in. I’m so glad I came,” she sighed, spinning to face them. “Everyone should feel this way!”

The stylist snorted. “That’s the general idea.”

The clerk smiled. “Everyone will—someday. Now get out there and show the world what you’ve got. Right now, that lovely hair is our best weapon against the patriarchy.” ■