

SOAP AND SECRETS

Written by

Simon K. Parker

Simonkyleparker@hotmail.co.uk
Copyright 2024

FADE IN:

INT. CAR WASH - DAY

Ava (early 30s, wearing a faded car wash uniform) scrubs a car with determination. She glances over at Ethan (late 20s, impeccably dressed), who's leaning against his sleek sports car, checking his phone.

AVA
(muttering)
Come on, Ava. You can do this.

She takes a deep breath, wipes her hands on her apron, and walks over to Ethan.

AVA (CONT'D)
Hey, Ethan! New car? It's awesome.

ETHAN
(barely looking up)
Yeah, are you cleaning it?

AVA
(nervously)
It would be an honour. But, I was wondering if maybe... you'd like to grab a coffee sometime. My treat.

ETHAN
(laughs)
Are you being serious? You're hitting on me? Oh my god just clean my car. And for the record I'm gay.

Ava's face falls. She tries to hide her disappointment.

AVA
Oh, you're gay?

ETHAN
Look, you seem like a nice girl but just wash the car. I come here because you do a good job. So please, just do your job.

He turns away, dismissing her. Ava blinks back tears, her vibrant spirit momentarily crushed.

AVA
(whispering)
Yeah, back to work.

As Ava returns to her scrubbing, Ethan glances back at her, a hint of regret in his eyes.

ETHAN

(softly)

Hey, if I were straight I'd bang you. Ok. Feel better? Don't be angry. And don't scratch the paint.

But Ava doesn't hear him. She's already lost in the rhythm of the car wash, her heartache hidden behind the spray of water.

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ava sits on the edge of her bed, bathed in the soft glow of a bedside lamp. She clutches a worn-out journal, its pages filled with scribbles and doubts.

AVA

(whispering)

I know I love him.

She flips through the journal, stopping at a page where she's drawn a delicate butterfly.

AVA (CONT'D)

We're soulmates. We were meant to meet. Meant to be together. But somewhere something went wrong.

Her gaze drifts to the mirror across the room. She studies her reflection—the strong jawline, the curve of her lips. She puffs out her chest.

AVA (CONT'D)

(letting out a deep
breath)

Maybe I was the one born wrong.

She reaches for her phone, fingers trembling, and opens a browser.

Ava types - "Signs you might be born in the wrong body."

The search results fill the screen. Ava's heart races.

Discomfort with your assigned gender:

AVA (CONT'D)

Well, that's me. The car wash uniform, the way people look at me—it all feels wrong.

Questioning your identity.

AVA (CONT'D)
I've questioned it for years.

Imagining yourself as another gender.

She hesitates, then continues typing. She's on the hunt to know more.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - SUPPORT GROUP MEETING - EVENING

A small room with mismatched chairs. Ava sits next to JORDAN (40s, confident, trans), who wears a trans pride pin.

JORDAN
(smiling)
Hey, I'm Jordan. Don't worry, I don't bite. But you've got that look in your eyes that just screams it's your first time here. Am I right?

AVA
Yeah. You got it. I'm Ava by the way. Nice to meet you.

Jordan leans in, eyes kind.

JORDAN
So, Ava, what brings you here? You look like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

AVA
(hesitant)
Well, I've been... feeling like I'm not the person I'm supposed to be. Born in the wrong body is the best way to describe it.

Jordan nods, encouraging her to continue.

AVA (CONT'D)
(softly)
I think I might be trans. Like, really trans. I want to be a man. A beautiful man.

Jordan raises an eyebrow.

JORDAN
A beautiful man? Why say that?

AVA

(looking down)

There's this guy, Ethan. I've been in love with him ever since I first saw him. But he's not interested you know. He's gay. But I know we're meant to be together. I just know it.

Jordan leans back, studying Ava.

JORDAN

So, you want to change yourself—so that you can be with this Ethan?

AVA

(nodding)

Yeah. I thought if I looked different, maybe he'd see me. Maybe he'd want me. He'll finally understand that we are meant to be together.

Jordan's expression shifts, a mix of empathy and concern.

JORDAN

Ava, listen. Transitioning—it's not about someone else. It's about you. Your truth. Your identity. It's a journey, and it's hard. You have to be really, really sure. So I'm asking you, are you really sure?

AVA

But I'm in love with him, and I know it's real. Ethan is—

JORDAN

Ethan isn't the reason. You need to know who you are, independent of anyone else. Transitioning is about self-discovery, self-acceptance. It's not a shortcut to someone's heart. You must see that?

Ava looks torn.

AVA

No, you just don't understand. I know it sounds crazy. But I feel it and I know that it's true.

JORDAN

(firmly)

You need to be sure. Explore your feelings, talk to people who've been through this. It's not easy, and it's not always pretty. But it's real. There is no return ticket Ava.

Ava glances around the room at others sharing their stories.

AVA

I know the life I have now isn't what I'm meant for. I'm meant for more. I know I am. I'm supposed to fall in love. And it's Ethan.

JORDAN

That's okay. You're here. You're asking questions. Just remember, Ava, you're not doing this for Ethan. You're doing it for you.

As the support group continues, Ava wrestles with her emotions. Jordan's words linger.

INT. SURGEON'S OFFICE - DAY

A sterile room with medical equipment. Dr. RYAN (40s, compassionate) sits across from Ava. Ava clutches her hands, nerves dancing.

DR. RYAN

(kindly)

Ava, thank you for coming in. I understand you're considering transitioning. Can you tell me why? I'm sorry if it's personal but I have to ask.

AVA

(steadfast)

Yes, Dr. Ryan. I've known for a long time. It's not a whim or a fleeting thought. I want to be true to myself. I want to be a tall, handsome, strong man. One that would take your breath away.

Dr. Ryan leans back, studying her.

DR. RYAN

Ava, transitioning is a significant step. It's more than physical changes—it's emotional, social, and psychological. Have you explored your feelings thoroughly?

AVA

I know what I want. I'm paying you up front and in full. If you won't do it I'll simply find someone else.

Dr. Ryan nods, he's uncomfortable.

DR. RYAN

Do you have a support network?

AVA

I don't need one. Now are you going to give me what I want or do I take my business elsewhere?

Dr. Ryan opens a file, glancing at Ava's medical history.

DR. RYAN

Hormone therapy, chest surgery, genital reconstruction—

AVA

I want a deeper voice, facial hair, a flat chest. I want to feel whole lot.

Dr. Ryan leans forward, his tone gentle.

DR RYAN

Ava—

AVA

I'm going to give you to the count of five to say if we're doing this otherwise I'm getting up, taking my money with me and finding a doctor who will give me what I want. Do I make myself clear?

DR. RYAN

Alright. I'll do it.

AVA

Correct answer.

Dr. Ryan stands, extending his hand.

DR. RYAN

We can start the process tomorrow morning. Just promise me that you're ready.

AVA

(firmly)

I promise.

They shake hands, sealing Ava's resolve.

INT. AVA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ava, bandages wrapped around her chest and face, hiding her new appearance sits on the couch, staring at the ceiling. The room is dimly lit, and the air smells of antiseptic.

The door creaks open, and LILY (30s, Ava's best friend) steps inside. She carries a bouquet of sunflowers.

LILY

(softly)

Ava? How are you holding up?

Ava looks up, her eyes tired but determined.

AVA

I'm... okay, I guess.

Lily sits next to her, placing the sunflowers on the coffee table.

LILY

I can't believe you've done this to yourself. I'm not angry or disappointed, I'm just in shock.

Ava touches the bandages, wincing slightly.

AVA

It's done, and I'm happy.

LILY

(gentle)

I'm here for you, if you need me.

Ava glances at the window, sunlight filtering through the curtains.

AVA

The only person I need now is Ethan.

Lily takes Ava's hand.

LILY

Ava, when you say things like that
it makes me worry about you.

Ava's eyes well up.

AVA

But I can't stop thinking about
him. Am I the last person on earth
who still believes in true love and
is willing to do something about
it?

Lily leans in, her voice firm.

LILY

You can't undo what you've done
Ava.

Ava takes a deep breath.

AVA

I know. But you'll see. When we're
together you'll see.

LILY

I hope you're right. I really do.

Ava gazes at the sunflowers, their golden petals catching the
light.

Lily hugs her gently, Ava feels the weight of her bandages
and the warmth of Lily's support.

INT. CAR WASH - DAY

The sun beats down on the car wash, steam rising from the
freshly washed vehicles. Ava has been transformed. She stands
by the entrance, her chest wrapped tightly. Her hair short
and her features more masculine, easily passing for a man.

Ethan pulls up in his sleek sports car, sunglasses perched on
his nose. Ava's heart races.

AVA

(leaning against a bucket
of suds)

Hey there, back for another
sparkling wash?

Ethan glances at her, intrigued.

ETHAN
(smirking)
Hi, are you new here?

AVA
No, I've worked here for awhile.
Maybe you've just never noticed me?

Ethan chuckles, leaning against the car.

ETHAN
No, a face like yours. I definitely
would have noticed you. It's not
everyday that you get to see
beautiful men working at a car
wash.

He winks, and Ava's pulse quickens.

AVA
You know, I've always wondered what
it's like to drive a sports car.
Maybe you could show me sometime?

Ethan's eyes lock onto hers.

ETHAN
You think you could handle it. I
drive fast. Take risks.

AVA
(leaning in)
Oh, I can handle it. Trust me.

Their banter dances between them, Ava's heart soaring.

ETHAN
So, what's your name? And how did
you end up working in a place like
this?

Ava hesitates.

AVA
Alex. My name is Alex. And I don't
know. I guess I like cars and need
quick easy money.

Ethan steps closer, his fingers brushing her hair.

ETHAN

Alex, you're something else. I can't believe I never noticed you working here before today. Maybe I need my eyes testing?

Ava's heart flutters. Maybe this isn't about Ethan anymore. Maybe it's about the man she's becoming.

AVA

So, Ethan, how about that coffee? Out would you prefer something a little more exciting.

Ethan grins, and for the first time, Ava feels seen.

ETHAN

Coffee sounds good, Alex. But the car ride? Buckle up. I know something we can do that's a lot more fun than coffee.

INT. ETHAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The room is dimly lit, the air heavy with anticipation. Ava stands near the window, her pulse echoing the city's distant hum. Ethan approaches, his eyes locked on hers.

ETHAN

Alex, I want you.

His lips brush against hers, and Ava's world tilts. The kiss is electric, a promise of more.

AVA

(whispering)

Ethan...

He trails kisses along her jaw, his hands sliding down her back. Ava's heart races.

ETHAN

Alex, you're not like anyone else.

Ava's fingers tangle in his hair, pulling him closer. Desire and vulnerability collide.

AVA

Ethan, I've been waiting for this too. But... I need you to know something.

He looks into her eyes, searching.

ETHAN
What is it?

AVA
I love you.

Ethan smiles. He reaches down the front of her pants, expecting to grab hold of something but it isn't there.

ETHAN
(Frowns)
Erm..... Alex?

AVA
Yeah?

ETHAN
Where the hell is your penis?

AVA
(nervous)
I'm trans. I don't have one. I don't need one. I love you. I just needed you to finally see me and you do.

ETHAN
You're trans?

AVA
It doesn't matter what I am. I love you and I've always loved you. We're meant to be together.

ETHAN
(shouting)
Get out of my house!

AVA
(voice trembling)
Ethan, please, just hear me out. It's not what you think.

ETHAN
You lied to me.

Ethan's desperation grows. He glances around looking for a way out.

AVA
(voice cracking)
Ethan, I had my reasons. We're meant to be together.

Ethan lunges at Ava, grabbing her collar. Ava's survival instincts kick in. She grabs onto a nearby lamp and swings, smashing it against Ethan's temple.

ETHAN
(staggering)
You little—

Ethan stumbles backward, blood trickling down his face. Ava's adrenaline surges. She drops the broken lamp and lunges at Ethan, tackling him to the ground.

AVA
(wild-eyed)
I love you. I'm not letting you
walk away from me. Not now. Not
after I've done so much for you.

They grapple. Ethan grabs a hold of Ava's throat and starts to squeeze.

Ava's hand gropes for something—anything. Her fingers close around a shard of the shattered lamp.

AVA (CONT'D)
(desperate)
All I wanted was for you to love
me. But you've ruined me.

She drives the shard into Ethan's side. Ethan gasps, loosening his grip. Ava pushes him away, staggering toward the door.

She stumbles out of the room, leaving James bleeding on the floor.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END