

Sarah's Make—Over

Sarah has been a part of my life since I was 10, but I always found it has been difficult to fully enjoy her time. I had previously had a transformation in another city about 10 years ago, and I decided that the time was right to treat Sarah again. In looking for a transformation service, I was put in touch with Ophelia who was in the process of setting up her business. In talking with her on the phone, I found her to be very knowledgeable and approachable. My work schedule allowed me some time in Sydney, so at short notice we arranged to meet for coffee and talk more about what I wanted to achieve. The meeting went well (how could it go wrong when Ophelia arrived with a wicked sense of humour and a collection of shoes and accessories!) and we made plans for the transformation day. As I was to be Ophelia's first customer, she asked if I would be comfortable with her friend Jill, a founding member of the Seahorse Society, came along. I agreed and am so glad that I had the opportunity to meet someone with Jill's experience.

On the day, I arrived, parked the car and went to a nearby café to wait for Ophelia. We met, and then went back to the apartment to get settled. After a look around at her collection of clothes and accessories, we conducted a review of my clothes to work out which ones to keep and which should be culled. We also discussed some various styles we wanted to achieve, and as Jill wasn't far away, I started to get dressed.

After Jill arrived, I slipped on a pink full slip and settled into the make-up chair. For the next twenty minutes, I was fussed over by two experts as my make-up was applied. I put on a black skirt, a blue angora top that Jill had brought over for me to wear, and with the addition of the wig Sarah had emerged. It took a few minutes for me to fully absorb the woman in front of me in the mirror. I could never quite achieve the effect that Ophelia and Jill had managed with Sarah's make-up, and I probably could have spent hours looking at her, but why just look in the mirror when you have a willing photographer and a world at your call!

It was time for Sarah's first steps outside. I had never thought that I would have the confidence to go out in public, but in company with Ophelia and Jill I was emboldened. We left the apartment and walked down to the beach where we had some impromptu photos taken before stopping in at a café for a coffee. I was amazed that I was doing this without attracting any unwanted attention – to everyone else around we were just three girls having a Saturday afternoon catch-up. Jill had to leave, but Ophelia and I still had time to do some shopping, so we headed towards the local St Vincent's shop. Whilst there were still a number of shoppers inside, no one was fussed as we hunted through the racks finding a collection of clothes and shoes to try on. We worked out what to buy, and left the shop with some great bargains – including my first pair of black, knee length boots! I was just buzzing with excitement.

After getting back to the apartment with our shopping finds, we had a bit of a girlie chat over a champagne life and then it was time for dinner. We stepped out (wearing my new boots of course), and headed over to a nearby Italian restaurant. I was smiling as the waiter offered to take 'the two ladies' to our table. Again, I blended in completely as we had a beautiful meal and bottle of wine – I even went to the ladies room without anyone looking twice. It was the most incredible experience that I have ever had – I had been out in public three times and had never been treated as anything but a woman. I had never thought that I could have done this, but thanks to Ophelia I felt that anything was possible!

On leaving the restaurant, we headed back to the apartment to try on some outfits. Ophelia provided a wide range of clothes and we spent a number of hours selecting various outfits to try on, with Sarah being the star of the photo shoots. There were so many great outfits, including a beautiful wedding dress and an amazing fur coat that perfectly completed a black cocktail dress that I owned. There were even a few beautiful outfits that I was too small for – and what a fantastic feeling it was to be light- heartedly called a ‘bitch’ for being slim! We had such a great time that when we looked up at the clock it was 3:00am – I had been playing dress up for five hours without even noticing. I had an early morning departure to get to work, so unfortunately Sa- rah had to be packed away for another time, although we still managed to talk and try some different looks until I had to leave at 6:00am.

Overall, I can’t speak highly enough of Ophelia and her work with Sarah. She focused on what Sarah wanted to achieve and how best to turn those wishes into reality. She had great ideas for a range of nearby cafes, restaurants and shops where we could visit and with her knowledge of photography she had a fantastic range of ideas to best capture the highlights of the day. I would be happy to recommend Ophelia to anyone in a similar situation to me, whether you are just interested in experimenting with different looks or you are looking to experience the world as a woman.

Sarah C.