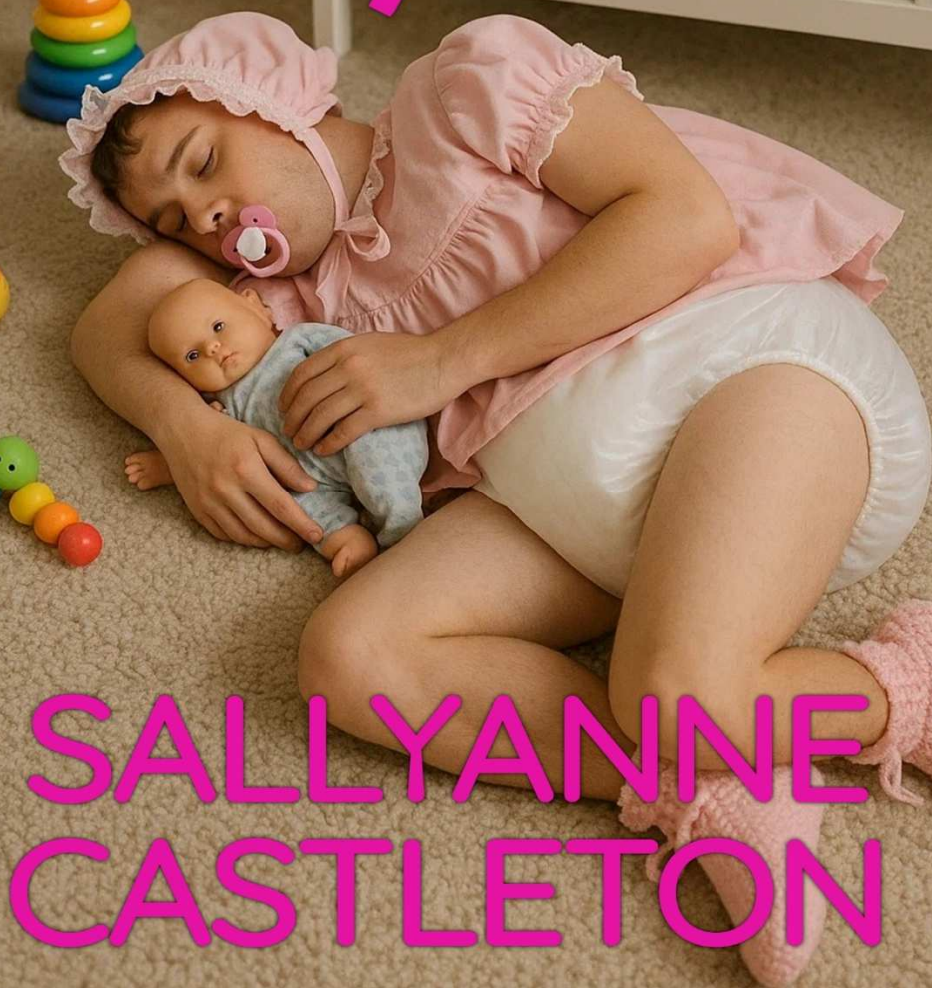


AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK

Becoming April



SALLYANNE
CASTLETON

Becoming April

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by

Sallyanne Castleton

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Chapter 1 – Eyes Across the Seminar

A romantic crush could be a kind of fever. That's certainly how Noah Elliot explained it to himself, anyway. It was something temporary, intense, and irrational, and it would burn itself out if left untreated, he was sure. Still, he found himself attending the Women's Literature seminar each week like a moth to a lamp. He had no interest in Jane Austen or bell hooks, or Mary Shelley. He just craved to be near her - Lana St. James, the graduate TA.

He knew it was faintly pathetic, but it was a drive of quite some potency. In his regular masturbation fantasies, Lana was the face he saw, as well as imagining more of her. Part of him was ashamed at jerking off over her image while another felt she should be flattered... if she knew, not that there was any chance of that.

She didn't look like the other women in the English department, which was easy to do. She didn't wear cardigans, sensible flat shoes, and there were no clumsy bangs. Lana wore vintage dresses, chunky boots, and a ring on every finger. Her voice was slow, low, and teasing when she spoke to students, her eyes always holding just a second too long. Was she gay? It occurred to Noah that she might be given how she dressed and acted, but in his daily masturbation sessions, she was very definitely heterosexual.

Noah was invisible to her, and he liked it that way. He was a far from confident young man, just a ghost in the back row, pretending to take notes, all the while writing nonsense in the margins as he watched her mouth form syllables and wishing he was kissing her, or making love.

He knew how pathetic it was. He knew how weird it would be if someone discovered the notebook full of idle sketches of her hands,

her boots, the faint scar on her lip. He even imagined what Lana might say if she caught him: “That’s a little obsessive, baby.” She’d probably say it with a smile. And she would be very correct.

It was obsessive, and he knew it, but being obsessed was something of his life to date. He tended to obsess over things he collected, books he read, and models he built. Everything had to be perfect and well organised, even if he wasn’t himself.

Then one Thursday afternoon, his sanctuary of private obsessive imagination cracked.

The seminar ended, the clatter of chairs and zippers ringing out like usual. Noah packed his bag quickly, keeping his head down, but as he turned to go, Lana’s voice wrapped itself around him like a silk noose.

“Noah, stay for a sec?”

His breath hitched. He froze and then slowly turned around. She was still seated at the front, sorting papers into a worn leather folder. Her nails were black and pointed. Her smile wasn’t warm, but it wasn’t cold either. It was curious, perhaps a bit ‘academic’.

He stepped forward.

“I’ve been watching you,” she said.

Noah blinked. “W—what?” His heart skipped a beat.

Lana closed her folder with a snap. “You don’t talk in class. Ever. But your eyes never stop moving. You watch everything. Especially me.” She leaned her elbow on the desk, resting her chin in her hand. “Is it nerves? Shyness? Or something more... er... interesting?”

Noah’s heart thudded against his ribs like a frantic fist. “I just... I like the class. I didn’t think I needed to talk.”

Lana cocked her head. “But silence says plenty in a room that discusses literature, wouldn’t you say?”

He swallowed, unsure whether to run or sit or disappear entirely.

Instead, she rose from her chair, slowly, like she had all the time in the world. It seemed deliberate to draw his attention.

"I'm not here to embarrass you," she said. "But you're failing your weekly response papers. And I happen to think you're not stupid. Just... perhaps... distracted."

He opened his mouth, but nothing came out. She took a step closer.

"Tell you what," she said, flipping open her planner. "Come to my office tomorrow after class. I'll help you figure out how to focus again. Unless, of course, you'd rather just keep staring and just flunk out."

Noah stammered, "N-no... I mean... yes. Okay. I can do that."

"Good." She smiled again, wider now. "Bring your notebook. And your curiosity, and we'll see what we can do together."

He left the room on shaking legs, notebook clutched to his chest, cheeks flushed so deeply it felt like his skin had caught fire. He didn't sleep that night. He lay awake, staring at the ceiling, imagining her voice. Her fingers. The smell of her skin. There was something dangerous about the way she looked at him, like she was already four moves ahead, and he was just the pawn waiting to be pushed.

He tried to relieve the pressure, hand moving under the blanket in the dark, but even then, Lana's voice echoed, "That's a little obsessive, baby."

And he couldn't finish. Not without imagining what else she might do with that word. "Baby."

It was the first time he'd ever failed to cum with the picture of Lana in his mind. But it was also the first time she had spoken to him, and it terrified him.

Lana's office was different from what he'd imagined when he arrived. He expected it to be sterile and academic, with books stacked in angry piles and fluorescent lights buzzing overhead. But the moment he stepped inside, he knew better. The lights were off. A small desk lamp glowed warmly in the corner. There was a rug on the floor—faded blue and threadbare in the middle. Two worn armchairs sat angled together with a teapot steaming gently between

them. It had 'academic' written all over it, but it was also tidy, organised and comfortable.

"Close the door," Lana said without looking up from her desk.

He did. She stood and crossed the room barefoot. Her boots were on the floor beneath the desk. Her toenails were painted soft pink, which somehow made his ears burn. In his fantasies, she had pink toenails even if his interest had lain a little higher...

"Tea?" she asked, already pouring it.

"Yes," he said too quickly.

She handed him the cup, fingers brushing his. "Sit."

He lowered himself into the armchair. It was softer than expected and lower. His knees were awkwardly high.

"So," she said, curling into her chair across from him. "Tell me. Why are you really in this class?"

"I... I like reading?" he offered, though it sounded more like a question. Even as he said it, he knew it was unconvincing.

Lana's lips twitched. "That's cute. But I don't think that's it."

Noah stared into his tea.

"I think you like being here because you're fascinated by women who don't need your approval. Women who make you feel something." She sipped her tea calmly. "Maybe women who scare you just a little."

Noah's hand trembled on the cup.

Fuck me! How did she pick all that up about me so quickly?

Lana tilted her head. "Am I wrong?"

"I..." He hesitated. "I don't know what to say."

"That's the first honest thing you've said, and I appreciate it."

She set her cup down and leaned forward.

"Noah, I don't think you're dumb. But I do think you're somewhere else most of the time. Caught up in your little fantasy world, which is probably very detailed and probably very private."

He looked up, startled.

Fuck! She knows I wank off to her! How does she know these things?

Her eyes met his, soft but unrelenting. "And I think you've been very lonely in there."

He swallowed and half nodded. His fantasies was simply him and Lana and no one else and he imagined going into her and cumming inside her instead of his hand.

How do you know this? he asked himself.

"I'm not going to judge you," she continued. "But if I'm going to help you focus, I need to understand where you go when you drift."

He blinked.

"Do you daydream during class?" she asked.

"...Yes."

"Do you imagine me?" Her voice was gentle, matter-of-fact.

Noah's mouth parted, but no sound came out.

"Okay, that's a yes," Lana said, smiling faintly. "It's okay. I know what it's like to be obsessed with someone. When I was younger, I had a crush on a ballet instructor who made me cry just by fixing my posture. So, I get it."

She didn't laugh. She let the moment sit and settle.

"I want to try something with you," she said. "It's not a trick. Just... a little focus exercise."

Noah hesitated.

"I promise it'll help you concentrate on the work and not just on me."

"Okay," he said softly.

Lana rose and moved the teapot aside. She kneeled in front of his chair, hands resting on her thighs, her body calm and centred.

"I want you to breathe in through your nose," she said. "Nice and slow. Hold it... Now exhale through your mouth."

He obeyed.

"Again," she said. "Deep breath in... hold... exhale. Good."

Her voice dropped a register.

"You're safe here. You're wanted here. And you don't have to pretend."

He closed his eyes.

"Good boy," she said quietly.

His eyes fluttered open. She smiled gently, but unmistakably.

"You liked that?" she asked.

He didn't respond.

Lana sat back on her heels. "There's something inside you, Noah. Something soft and gentle, something aching to be touched, but terrified of being seen." Her hand reached out, and she placed two fingers lightly under his chin, lifting his face.

"You can let it out here. I won't break it."

His breath caught.

"Whatever you're holding," she whispered, "you don't have to hold it alone."

She let go.

He sank back against the chair, dizzy from the warmth in her voice, the pressure in his chest, the rising heat beneath his belt as his erection grew hard, and he felt the shame.

Lana looked first at his bulging trousers, grinned, then stood and moved to the desk.

"We'll do these sessions weekly," she said, her voice now casual again. "I'll call them focus hours. Same time. Same place."

She wrote something in her planner.

"Oh," she added without turning, "and next time, don't wear something so stiff. I want you to be comfortable. Soft trousers or track pants."

Noah blinked. "Comfortable?"

Lana looked back over her shoulder. Her eyes gleamed. "You'll see."

Very aware of his fully erect cock that showed even in his trousers, he couldn't imagine his horror and embarrassment of his erection if he were wearing track pants.

Chapter 2 – The Soft Spot

The following week, Noah dressed with trembling hands. He hesitated before choosing what to wear, twice changing shirts, once standing barefoot on the cold floor of his dorm in nothing but his underwear, staring at himself. He didn't know what "comfortable" meant to Lana. Pyjamas? Jeans? Nothing at all? He had masturbated to her image twice a day since with a fury that wouldn't abate. In his mind he had enjoyed intercourse with her many times while in reality, his penis had only ever enjoyed his hand. He was still a virgin.

In the end, he settled on sweatpants and a soft cream hoodie. It felt too casual, too exposed. But when he knocked at Lana's office door, she opened it with a smirk.

"Much better," she said, and stepped aside.

He entered cautiously. The lights were low again. The teapot was already steaming. The rug, the same worn rug, was laid out in the centre now, not under the chairs. There was no furniture, just cushions. She gestured to the floor.

"Sit."

He obeyed.

Lana followed and curled up across from him, her legs folded gracefully beneath her like she belonged there, like she always did.

"I've been thinking about you," she said softly.

Noah looked up, startled.

"You hide in plain sight. I know what that's like. That's not easy to do." She poured the tea. "It takes discipline to shrink yourself so well."

He blinked. "I don't mean to hide."

"No. But it's safer, isn't it?"

He hesitated. Then nodded.

She handed him his cup. "I told you I wasn't going to judge you."

"I remember."

Lana tilted her head. "Do you remember what else I called you?"

Noah looked down. "You said... good boy."

Her smile curled. "And how did that make you feel?"

He hesitated again. A long pause. His breath caught somewhere behind his ribs.

"...Small," he whispered.

"Small can be safe," she replied. "Small can be soft. Small can be beautiful."

He stared at the tea. The steam curled upward in slow spirals.

"I want to try something again," Lana said. "Like last time."

Noah nodded, slowly.

Lana shifted closer, closer than before. Her knees nearly touched his. Her hands rested loosely in her lap, the rings on her fingers catching the warm lamplight.

"This time," she said, "I want you to listen carefully. Don't try to do anything. Just follow."

"Okay."

"Deep breath in through your nose... hold... and let it out."

He obeyed.

"Again. In... hold... and out."

Her voice softened further.

"You're warm. The air is warm. My voice is warm. Let it hold you."

Another breath.

"You're not in class now. You're not at school. You're not trying to impress anyone."

She moved her fingers slowly, deliberately.

"You're not a student right now. You're not a man. You're not anything that's heavy or sharp or tense."

His body slackened.

"You're something soft. Something open."

Noah's hands were limp in his lap now. His lips parted. He wasn't sure what he was anymore, just that her voice was a river, and he was drifting in it.

"Good," she whispered. "That's very good."

Then she reached out and touched his wrist. Just two fingers, lightly pressed against his pulse.

He shivered.

"When I touch you here," she said, "I want you to remember what it feels like to be soft. To be empty. To be mine."

He blinked.

"Noah isn't here right now," she continued. "But that's okay. He can rest."

She tapped once.

"Instead, I want to speak to the little one. The soft one. The quiet heart inside."

He swallowed.

"Does she have a name?" Lana asked.

A flicker of thought, of embarrassment. But the words rose, unbidden.

"...April."

Lana smiled. "Hello, April."

His eyes fluttered.

"Do you like that name?" she asked.

"...Yes."

"It suits you."

She shifted forward, her voice now barely above a whisper. "April is gentle. April is good. April listens. April lets her mommies take care of her."

The word *mommies* made something tighten in his chest. Lana saw it.

"Yes," she said, reading him. "That's what this is. That's what you've been looking for."

She tapped again.

"When you are April, you do not need to make choices. You do not need to explain yourself. You only need to listen... and obey."

A tiny moan escaped his lips, and Lana grinned.

"You like that. You need that."

He nodded, his movement barely perceptible.

"You've spent so long pretending to be a boy. So long pretending to be something hard. But it's not you, is it, baby?"

"No..." he whispered. "It's not."

"You don't have to pretend anymore."

Her fingers moved—slowly, carefully—and rested over his lap. Not possessive, not aggressive. Just there. She felt his half erection.

"April is allowed to be soft. April is allowed to be sweet."

Her thumb stroked gently.

"April is allowed to wear what makes her feel safe. What makes her feel real."

He whimpered.

Lana leaned in, her lips near his ear.

"When the time comes," she said, "you'll ask me for your first diaper. And I'll say yes. Because good girls get what they need."

Noah shuddered. And from deep inside him, he ejaculated with her hand on his lap, feeling the pulses. And somewhere deep inside, April bloomed.

Lana's fingers lifted from April's lap—slowly, reverently—as if she were adjusting something sacred. The dampness in his sweatpants from his cum wasn't an issue.

Then her palm returned to the inside of April's wrist. She found her pulse, frantic. She smiled.

"Let's go deeper now," Lana whispered, her breath warm against April's cheek.

"Breathe in... and fall."

April exhaled, and everything slipped.

"You feel your thoughts floating like feathers now," Lana murmured. "Each one drifting away. One by one. Let them go."

She tapped the wrist.

"Let go of remembering. Let go of trying. Let go of being strong. You don't need to be strong anymore."

April's jaw loosened, her mouth slightly open. Her eyes fluttered shut.

"Now I want you to imagine a staircase, baby," Lana cooed. "It goes down and down, and you love going down. It's warm, pink, and soft at the bottom. It smells like powder. It smells like comfort."

April whimpered, her breathing shallow. Her erection had disappeared entirely.

"You want to go there. You need to go there."

Another soft tap on her wrist.

"Down ten steps... one at a time. With each number, you go deeper."

Lana began counting slowly.

"Ten... safe and sleepy.

Nine... your fingers curl around something small. Maybe a soft bunny. Maybe a blankie.

Eight... your legs feel heavy, your tummy squishy, your mind slow.

Seven... maybe your thumb wants to find your mouth. Maybe it already has."

And it had. Lana watched as April's hand sluggishly lifted, thumb brushing her lips, then entering.

She sucked her thumb. The sound was soft, wet, and involuntary.

Lana melted inside at the boy becoming a girl in front of her.

"Six... Mommy's voice is the only sound that matters.

Five... your name is April. You've never been anyone else.

Four... your words are gone. Only babble and giggles now.

Three... diapers are normal. Diapers are needed. Diapers are love."

April's body jerked slightly, a low whimper escaping around her thumb.

"Two... you're not big. You're not grown. You're not even potty trained."

And finally—

"One."

Lana leaned close.

"Good baby."

April sagged fully now, limp and glazed. Her eyes lolled open, unfocused. Her thumb moved rhythmically in and out, her lips suckling hungrily.

"There she is," Lana breathed. "Mommy's perfect baby girl."

She stroked the back of April's hair.

"You don't need big words anymore. Or pants. Or thoughts. Just this."

April moaned softly in response.

"You don't even remember how to spell your name, do you, baby?"

A shake of the head. Slow. Mushy.

Lana smiled. "Good girl."

She reached behind the nearby cushion and pulled something from a bag. A pink pacifier.

She tapped April's wrist.

"When I take out your thumb, you'll open for your paci, won't you, baby?"

April nodded drowsily.

Lana gently removed the thumb, wiped the wetness with her sleeve, and pressed the pacifier between April's lips.

She suckled immediately.

"Mmm... that's better," Lana said, cradling April's head in her lap now.

"You look so sweet like this."

She leaned in, whispered at the edge of April's ear:

"You're going to need this feeling. This blank, babyish, sweet little space. You'll crave it. You'll ache for it."

Lana's hand rested lightly over April's chest.