

# Stepmother's Volunteer



**Susan Hulbert**

An "Adult TV" Novel



## **Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers**

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# Stepmother's Volunteer

**By Susan Hulbert**

There are some girls who can fill a small space in a crowd. There are some girls who can occupy the foreground of a picture. This wasn't one like that; this was a girl who owned the whole space in which she stood.

She walked with feline grace. She didn't simply slink through the crowds. She moved through them as if they didn't exist. They were there surely, but they gave way as she moved.

Everything about her said, "Look at me."

Everything about her said, "I don't care if you stare."

Everything about her said, "I possess all that I choose to possess and the rest can go hang."

Because everything about her shouted that this was a woman to command an army of suitors, this

was a woman who could choose, one who would not easily be swayed.

In short, this was the girl of a century's dreams; a lifetime of looking couldn't find another.

And underneath? Well, who knew what lay underneath as she walked through the market in the sunshine with her sunglasses pushed up into her hair?

Who knew what she was thinking, as she fingered the belts and blouses, the silks and the leather on the stalls?

She wasn't always like that; so self-assured and comfortable in her skin, yet today, none of that showed. Her eyes saw everything; her lips always showed the nearness of a smile.

It was impossible to see her and not to look at her. Women would hate her. Men would wish that they could fall at her feet.

The short thin dress clung to a perfect figure; the heels so thin and delicate on her shoes. They would see the hair, the eyes so dark and beautifully made-up. They would see the gold at her ears and on her fingers, and know that she was beyond their dreams.

She met another girl who looked almost like her twin. They fell into each other's arms, hugging and holding onto each other like lovers often do. They talked a few seconds and then, arm-in-arm, walked on as if they were the only two in the world.

Yet it all started so differently.

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"Logan, you've arrived home just in time. I've an exciting project from my professor," his stepmother announced. "You're going to be my subject to study."

She was June, about twelve years older than Logan and twelve younger than Duke, his father, and about three light years ahead in intelligence. And she ruled the house like a medieval tyrant.

Logan's heart sank. Whatever it was, he knew he wasn't going to like it.

"What sort of project?" he asked without any enthusiasm.

"I don't have all the details yet. I submitted a proposal that fits with his general area of research. I should be able to explain it all when I get back from a full briefing later."

"So that interests me how?"

"I told Professor Speak that you'd be more than willing to help."

"But it's vacation time soon."

"And you'll be lounging around with those so-called friends of yours at the mall or in the ball park. You've not even thought about getting a job. This way, you'll be helping and contributing to valuable research."

"How do you work that out?" Logan thought it a sensible question.

"Don't ask me to explain everything. My professor is funded by the Navy so it must be a valuable project."

She didn't say that he was funded by the Navy for something completely different.

"I don't want to do it," Logan said. "Whatever it is, include me out."

"Logan, just think of what your father would say."

"I hope he'd say that you're my stepmother and that you should butt out of my life."

“Logan, how could you?” There was almost smoke coming out of her ears, she was so angry. “You’re seventeen and still a minor. You’ll do what you’re told. Your father will tell you the same.”

“That’s only because he’s scared of your temper.”

That was it. He knew he’d lit a fuse and that when the explosion came he was going to be the one in pieces.

“Go to your room!” she shouted. “I’ll get your father to talk some sense and respect into you later.”

“I’m the one talking sense,” Logan shouted as he left the room. “Just because you’re a college grad and twelve years older than me, it doesn’t mean that I always have to dance to your tune.”

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“You’ve really upset your stepmother,” Dad started. “I think you owe her an apology.”

“I don’t think so,” Logan said. “She’s lined me up for some stupid project. I always get the soggy end of these things. I’m sure that it’s all very worthy but I don’t want to be part of it.”

“She’s always been good to you.”

“I hardly know her,” Logan said. “Sure it was okay before she went to that fancy university for her doctorate but now it’s all she can do to speak to me.”

“She’s worked hard and got her qualifications,” Dad said. “It’s something we’re really proud of.”

“And you both think I’m some sort of waster.” Logan hated arguing with his father. “I’m not as bright, and no matter how I study, I can’t do the things she’s done.”

“I’m sure we don’t expect you to be the same.”

“June does,” Logan said bitterly. “And she expects me to be as excited about her research projects as she is.”

“She only wants the best for you. If helping keeps you away from those wasters you hang about with, then I’m all for it.”

“But...”

“No buts from you; you’ll do what your stepmother tells you and no argument.”

“Well said.” June came into the room. “Logan, you heard your father.”

“I heard.”

“So you’ll do what you’re told and give me no problems,” she snarled. “I’m going to be back tomorrow to learn the details of what they tell me will be your starter kit. No sneaking out before I’m here or you’ll be sorry. And then you’ll do whatever you’re told for as long the project lasts.”

Logan looked at his father who looked away as if afraid to meet his eye.

“I don’t want to be some kind of laboratory mouse,” Logan said to deaf ears.

If this had been a power struggle, they all knew who had won.

“Don’t worry about him,” June said later when the conversation was relayed to her. “Once he’s in the programme, his behaviour’s going to change.”

“I sure hope you know what you’re doing.”

“Of course I do and he’ll be much happier in the end.”

“I don’t know why I let you persuade me that this was a good idea,” Dad said.

“You always wanted a daughter, didn’t you?”



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“Hi Logan.” His stepmother hugged him as soon as she arrived home the next evening, acting like they were friends again.

“Hi yourself.” Logan held himself rigid, not returning the hug.

“I guess I’ve upset you again,” she said. “I don’t want you to be upset but I’ve a great chance to impress. I’ve submitted a proposal and got it approved. I really need you to help me with it though.”

“I’ve no choice. I’ve been told that I’ve got to do whatever you want me to.”

“You haven’t heard what it is yet.” She stayed upbeat, trying to break his gloomy mood. “It’s going to be like you’re a secret agent in disguise.”

“Great, I’m going to be James Bond in a bunny costume?”

“Not quite but who told you?”

“Who told me what?”

“I guess that was just a flippant comment. You don’t really know anything.” She came to sit beside him.

“No one tells me anything, you know that.”

“Well, you were partly right.”

“About the James Bond bit?” Logan asked, with a sinking feeling in his heart that he’d chosen the wrong one.

“No but the bunny costume might feature somewhere in the future.” June did that thing with her fingers simulating ears.

“Tell me the worst.”

“Okay, the good news is you can move out and away from me for part of the time.” She saw him smile. “Not all the time, just for part of the time.”

“That can’t be bad,” Logan said. “Not that I want to be rude to you really, but you seem always to be on my case.”

“I don’t want you to see me like that. I really do want to do my best for you,” she continued. “You’re going to my supervisor’s institute for a few days as a first step.

“Why do I have to go there? I’m not the student or project worker, or anything.”

“No, you’re the subject. It’s important to establish exactly what and where you are before we start. They’ll do height and weight, blood and urine tests, metabolic rates and a host of other measurements.”

“It sounds like you’re sending me away to be some sort of biological experiment.”

“It’s nothing like that,” she said. “It’s important that we know the base line before anything changes.”

“Wait, no one mentioned that.” Logan felt a frisson of fear. “Who said you were allowed to change me.”

“Don’t be silly.” She was as evasive as ever. “It’s inevitable that you’ll change over the months of the project.”

“No one mentioned it taking months either,” Logan said angrily.

“That depends on you. It’s going to take as long as it takes. There’s no set timeframe.”

“Is there no good news at all?”

“There is good news,” June said. “You get paid.”

“How much?”

“That depends on the progress we make, but it could include use of a car.”

"I get my own car?" Logan exclaimed. "That could make it all worthwhile."

"The next piece of good news is that my assistant is Valentina Moreno," June said. "She'll be looking after you much of the time."

"I don't think I know her and I don't speak Spanish."

"You don't know her yet, but she's going to be your day-to-day contact. She's not Spanish despite her name and she's a recent graduate from my old university department."

"Don't tell me; brain the size of the universe, hips to match."

"I think you'll really like her." She flipped through her mobile. "I think I've a picture somewhere."

"Okay, I think I could get to like her," Logan said, looking at the picture of a super slim girl with long black hair, in a red dress that left little to the imagination.

"Don't get carried away; she doesn't always dress like that," his stepmother replied. "That was when we went to a fiesta where her folks live."

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"I wanted to meet you myself." Professor Speak was one of those old-fashioned absent-minded looking academics; a young fogey, dressed in an open neck shirt and jeans.

It was Logan's first morning on the project. He had no idea what to expect. He'd been dropped off, told where to go, and told that June would pick him up in a few days when they'd decided to start.

"I'm pleased to meet you, sir," Logan replied, surprised at the strength of his grip as they shook hands. "My stepmother speaks very highly of you."

“No need to stand on ceremony with me,” the professor replied. “I bet you hate her; don’t you?”

“Not really, but we don’t always agree.”

“You’re very diplomatic,” Professor Speak said with a grin. “I suppose she’s bribed you into this project.”

“She did mention that I get paid and she mentioned a car too.”

“Nothing like a good bribe, eh?” Professor Speak nodded sagely. “And you get the wonderful Valentina Moreno as your personal supervisor for part of the time. What more could a red-blooded guy ask for.”

“I haven’t met her.” Logan thought that the professor was thinking he was older and obviously more experienced than he really was.

“So you have that treat to come.” He smiled weakly. “Now I have to hand you over to the team. They’re going to do all kinds of measurements. It may get a bit tedious, but it’s necessary that we know what we have to start with.”

“Does that mean me?”

“Of course; if we aren’t sure of where we start, how are we to know what we’ve achieved at the end?”

“I think I understand,” Logan mumbled. “I’ve really no idea of what this is about.”

“Exactly so; all the results will be uncontaminated by your expectations.” Professor Speak indicated a door to the rear of his office and Logan followed him into an examination room.

“Here is our subject,” he announced to a white coated technician who was bending over a machine.

“I’m pleased to meet you.” He recognised Valentina Moreno behind the surgical mask. “You’re very brave to take part in this experiment.”

Logan shook her hand, wondering what was so brave about it all. It wasn't as if he'd chosen to take part. Should he be worried? he thought but her smile of welcome was too genuine for doubts to creep in.

Test followed test, as day followed day. Logan got used to wearing a surgical gown and lost all sense of embarrassment as he was subject to their tests. It got so repetitive that he gave up asking what each was for.

Valentina seemed to be quite cold and humourless as she worked, usually on her own with him, occasionally with an assistant. He was poked and prodded, measured in baffling detail. Blood tests, saliva tests, and tests of tests; no wonder he lost any idea of what they were for.

"These will be the last test tests we need to do," Valentina announced on the third day. "We need a final profile of your present hormone balance to compare."

"Wait a minute," Logan said. "Hormones. They're a sex thing, aren't they?"

"You are right; they're crucial for certain aspects of all of us," she replied lightly. "We all have them to differing degrees."

"So what would you want to compare them with?"

"It's important that we measure these things so that we aren't distracted into making false conclusions when the study is over."

Logan had no idea what this meant but he said nothing. He didn't want to appear ignorant when she smiled so beautifully and looked into his eyes with a "trust me" look.

"Now that's over, I only need your signature of consent on these forms." She held a pen and handed him some forms. "It's only a formality. June has signed as well because you're seventeen."

“I’m nearly eighteen.” Logan signed without looking.

“I think June is in the building. I only have to give you these booster injections and then I’ll take her to you and you can go home.”

“Don’t I have to stay? I thought Professor Speak said that I had to.”

“You may have to stay sometimes but not today.” She picked up the telephone and left a message for June as Logan rolled up the sleeve of his surgical gown.

“No, I need you to bend over the examination couch,” she told him. “These go into your glutinous maximus. It’s the strongest muscle in your body.”

Logan felt the swab and then the jab and pressure as the injection was placed deep into his muscles at each side. He was unprepared for the third jab, which was quicker and sharper than the others.

“I thought you said two,” he complained.

“Don’t worry; the last one was only your chip.”

“You’ve put a chip inside me; a computer chip?”

“It’s only for identification so that your samples in future don’t get mixed up,” Valentina replied. “It’s like they give dogs to identify them if they stray.”

“Wait a minute.” Logan realised the implications in a trice. “Those chips have a GPS. The owner can track the dog anywhere. I want you to take it out. I don’t want to be tracked like a dog.”

“I can’t take it out,” Valentina replied. “Once it’s in, it’s there to stay.”

“I can’t believe this.” Logan tried to feel where the chip was located.

“It’s tiny and has a very soft coating. You’ll never know it’s there.” Valentina tried to be reassuring.

"That's not what I'm worried about," Logan replied. "Anyone who has the code could track me anywhere. I couldn't hide."

"The code won't go out of this laboratory," Valentina said casually. "It's not as if you need to hide from anyone."

Logan could think of someone but he said nothing. He got dressed in his own clothes and waited for June to collect him.

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Logan felt really tired for the next few days. He didn't say anything at home. He guessed it was because of all the tests. He was even too lethargic to argue when June ordered him around. Everything was too much trouble.

"Are you feeling okay?" Dad asked a couple of evenings later. "You haven't bothered to have a row with June these last few days."

"Very funny," Logan said in a low voice. "I think they gave me something wrong at that clinic. I don't have the energy to do anything."

"Have you mentioned this to June?"

"I've hardly seen her since that afternoon," Logan yawned. "And I seem to have been sleeping most of the time."

"I'll give her a call," Dad replied. "Maybe this is something she should know about."

Within an hour, Logan was back in the clinic, this time lying in a bed, with machines measuring his vital signs.

"Everything seems to be okay." June came to see him after a couple of technicians and a white coated doctor had finished. "They want to keep you a couple

of days and get some test results before you go home.”

“How many more tests can there be?” Logan grumbled. “I’m like a human pin cushion.”

“It’s all for your own good,” June replied. “And we can get your room fumigated and redecorated with you out of the way.”

“I like my room,” Logan protested.

“You’ll like it more when it’s done,” June replied as she went out of the door.

A couple of days later, Logan was feeling brighter. He’d received a couple more injections in the same place and one in his arm. He felt a little hazy at first but as that wore off, he began to feel more like his old self.

“I think you’ll be ready for home tomorrow,” Valentina told him as he was sitting beside his bed. “I’ve been away and didn’t know you were here until I read the lists today.”

“I don’t know what you gave me, but it knocked me out,” he replied.

“That happens sometimes.” She looked at a chart. “It’s easily stabilised and shouldn’t happen again.”

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“Is this really still my room?” Logan looked round. “I can’t believe you’ve cleared everything out. It looks more like a girl’s room than mine.”

“Nonsense,” June replied. “It looks clean and bright. All the grungy old furniture needed to go.”

“But what did you do with my posters on the wall.”

“Pictures of naked women are not the sort of thing to be displayed on your walls. Do you realise how insulting they are to women?”



"There's a fat chance of me bringing any women here anyway," Logan snapped back but as he did so, the urge to argue seemed to fade away. "But I don't want to insult anyone."

"You're forgiven." June hugged him and to his surprise, he didn't pull away as he usually did.

"What did you do with my clothes? These drawers and wardrobes are empty," Logan asked as he explored all the changes to his room.

"They went to the cleaners if they were fit to be worn in future and the rest went to Goodwill or the dump."

"That's not fair." Again, Logan wanted to argue but couldn't get the anger to flow; he shook his head as if trying to clear his thoughts.

"I thought you'd like all the clean lines, the soft colours and the matching fabrics. Aren't they just perfect together?"

"It's like you designed the perfect room for yourself," Logan replied. "It's not like a boy's room at all." Once again, the anger wouldn't come.

June left him alone and he sank down on the bed. There was something beside the pillow. He reached to find what it was and pulled out a teddy bear wearing a ribbon and a cute smile.

Instinctively, he pulled it into his chest and hugged it.

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Next afternoon, Logan was sitting in a waiting room. June was to collect him when she'd finished in her office.

"Hi, I'm Murdoch." A girl came in and sat next to him. "Are you on the same programme as me?"

Logan looked at her. They were about the same age and size. She was beautiful, but there was something not quite feminine about her. Maybe it was the way she walked, or talked. It couldn't have been her hair which was pure corn silk and over her shoulders, or the way her body moved. She was slim with small breasts showing under her low-cut T-shirt.

Logan couldn't describe what it was but it was certainly there.

"I have no idea," Logan replied. "They didn't tell me that it was a programme, only that I was here for some sort of research."

"Did you see Valentina and did she give you some injections?" she asked, miming where they went.

"I think I reacted badly and they had to give me another couple of shots," Logan replied.

"It sounds like we're on the same thing then. Did they tell you what to expect?"

"They didn't tell me anything."

"It was the same with me," Murdoch replied. "I think I'm a few months ahead of you. I'm here for what they call 'monitoring' where they take samples again."

"But you don't know what they're looking for?"

"They haven't told me, but I think I can guess," Murdoch replied. "I hated it at first but now I'm starting to like everything about it."

Before they could talk any more, June appeared. She looked at Murdoch and quickly shepherded Logan out to her car.

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"Who was that girl?" Logan asked as June drove them home.

"She's been on the programme for a few months now," June replied.

"Do you know who she is?"

"I don't know her personally but I've seen her profile and her test results." June replied. "She's about nine months ahead of you in the programme."

"Will I see her again?"

"Probably: her results are really promising and part of the reason why they wanted to expand."

"And that's why I'm stuck in this mess," Logan replied bitterly. "I feel like I'm a human pin cushion. Stick a needle here and another there. How many injections does it take."

"I think it needs one more anti-grump injection." June tried to smile across the car. "Don't worry; one or two more sets of injections to go and then you won't be having more injections for a while but they have given me some pills for you to take."

"I need something," Logan said. "I feel really low, like I have no energy. I can't even be bothered to get mad at you for getting me into this mess."

"You're helping in valuable research," June snapped back. "You should be proud of that."

"I didn't volunteer," he replied. "And I've no idea what I'm supposed to prove at the end of it all."

"No one's going to tell you that." She shook her head as the car turned into their drive. "The results have to be measured separately and if you know too much, you could consciously or unconsciously, produce results which may be false."

"I have no idea what you mean." Logan got out of the car and slouched into the house without saying another word.

Next morning, Logan slept in late. By the time he woke, June and his dad had gone to work. He knew

he didn't feel right as he wandered through the house to the kitchen. He looked in the refrigerator but decided to wait before breakfast.

As the day went on, he grew more and more tired and listless. He sat in front of his computer and tried to concentrate on his favourite game but he lacked the energy to flip the game controller. He gave up and went to lie down.

"I think I'd better sleep this off," he decided and went to his room.

"So this is what they call a room makeover." Logan threw himself onto the bed, feeling so comfortable now that he was lying down.

He looked round, seeing the changes anew. It was all peach and light grey, with gently patterned fabrics and drapes. Gone were his pin-ups and piles of clothes on the floor. Everything was cleared behind the new closet doors and in the drawers under the huge mirror on the wall.

"I bet June designed this to get her own back on me," Logan thought as he drifted away. "It looks like a room she'd like; it's so girly."

He saw the teddy bear again. It seemed to sit there waiting for him. He hugged it to him again and buried himself deeper in the pillows, where sleep came quickly.

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"I think I'm dying," Logan moaned as June shook him awake. "I can't stand up without feeling like I want to fall down."

"I'll call the clinic," June replied. "I think you could be having a reaction. Don't worry. I've been warned that this might happen; you'll be alright soon."

"I think I'd rather die," Logan moaned.

"I'll get you some pills," June replied. "They should help you to feel better."

"I hate what you've done to my room," Logan said listlessly; he didn't have the energy to start an argument.

"You'll get used to it," June said breezily.

Logan sweated and ached all over. He drifted into sleep and tossed and turned fitfully. The night passed and the next day slipped away with no relief. On the morning of the third day, he woke feeling both calmer and stronger.

"You look so much better," Dad said when he looked in on him. June sent you these." He handed him some more pills and a glass of water. "I think she's tried to make an appointment at the clinic to make sure that you weren't reacting to anything there."

"Great; they'll probably think it was my fault," Logan mumbled, not quite hearing what was said.

"Valentina's coming to see you as soon as she can," Dad said. "From what I hear, she's a real beauty."

"She is and I'd hate for her to see me like this." Logan tried to sit up but fell back into his pillows. "But I guess she's not many options."

He felt a tear trickle down his cheek. "Now look at me." He turned over and sobbed into the bedclothes. "I'm crying like a baby and I don't know why."

Valentina arrived some time later. Logan didn't hear her arrive until she was shaking his shoulder as he lay in bed.

"June's told me all about what happened," she said. "I've just got to run a few more tests so that the lab can check on your vital signs."

Logan lay there as she took his blood pressure and a blood sample. Obediently, he turned over as she gave him two injections in each side of his butt, then a final one in his upper arm.

“That should help you get some really refreshing sleep,” she said as Logan felt a calm drowsiness creeping over him. “When you wake up, you’ll be raring to go.”

“I believe you,” he mumbled as sleep overtook him.

He slept on. In the middle of the night, he woke and went to his bathroom. He sat there; he was too tired to stand. As he relieved himself, he could feel something different in his backside. He felt round.

“It’s like there are three rods inside the top of my leg.” He tried to feel the other side. “Another three there. They’re soft and malleable. I wonder if that’s what Valentina put inside me. If it is, I didn’t feel anything.”

He was still too tired to think clearly. He went back to bed, deciding to ask questions in the morning.

He woke late and almost forgot about his discovery in the night. As he remembered, he felt round and he tried to locate what he had been able to feel in the night. There was nothing there, only a slight residual soreness from that area. He stood in front of the mirror and turned left and right. There was nothing to be seen either.

Maybe he’d imagined it all?

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“You’ve not been out much this last few weeks,” Dad said one evening as they ate together.

“I haven’t felt like it,” Logan replied as June cleared the table and carried things through to the kitchen. “And I couldn’t hang around with the same crowd

when I'm wearing the clothes that June bought for me."

"I think you look very nice," Dad replied.

"I'm not supposed to look nice," Logan replied. "I'm supposed to look like a grungy teenager, not some preppy fag."

"Don't use language like that," Dad admonished him. "It's not polite."

"I'm sorry but I don't know how to describe it. Look at me; if I didn't know better, I'd say I was wearing girls' Capri pants with penny loafers and a matching top."

"You look clean and tidy; what's wrong with that? You were such a slob before."

"But I'm wearing a pastel blue T-shirt with a slashed neckline over pale blue pants." Logan stood to show what he meant. "My hair's loose and brushed shiny clean so that it falls over my shoulders."

"Clean is good."

"But I'm doing it as if I don't know how to be any other way." Logan's eyes teared up. "It's as if I'm turning into some sort of girl."

"How many sorts of girl are there?" Dad asked but then saw Logan's face. "Okay, silly question."

"I don't want the guys to see me like this." Logan replied. "I don't want to see myself like this. I can't explain. When I get dressed, I see all these things and put them on as if by instinct. I make sure that they're clean and that they match. I don't want to do this but I don't know how *not* to do this."

"That doesn't make much sense but I do like to see you clean and pleasant," Dad said. "We always seemed to be at loggerheads before. Surely your friends would be glad to see you, yes?"