



A WISH FOR CHRISTMAS

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A Wish For Christmas

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CHAPTER ONE

... and Chill

Zoe curled her hair while searching for something interesting to watch on Netflix. She was sitting comfortably on the living room sofa wearing yoga pants and a USC Pharmacy School hoodie. Meanwhile, her boyfriend Ryan stood at the counter of the joined kitchen in their small Los Angeles apartment making drinks. Zoe was swigging her sweet wine while Ryan drank rum and coke. After grabbing a fresh round, he walked over to the sofa to join his girlfriend.

“Find anything good yet?” he asked, sitting down next to her, slightly upset she wasn’t wearing something that showed some cleavage.

“No....I’ve already watched the first season of *Orange is the New Black* and I don’t see anything new, movie-wise. What are you in the mood for?” Zoe asked as she smiled at her boyfriend.

“I don’t know; you can pick,” Ryan said while taking a swig of his drink.

Zoe settled on some Hallmark-style Christmas Rom-Com about a woman who falls in love with a married man after meeting at a Christmas cookie exchange. Ryan’s was not paying attention to the film, because there were several important things on his mind. The major thing was that this would be his last night with Zoe before they went their separate ways for Christmas.

Leaning her head on Ryan’s shoulder Zoe said, “I wish we were spending Christmas together again, but it’s great that you are finally going back home for Christmas!”

Several weeks ago, Ryan’s mom Pamela, talked him into coming home to Rivertowne, Delaware for the holidays. Since moving to Los Angeles four years ago, Ryan had not visited his family for several reasons.

For the first few years, his personal finances wouldn't allow him to travel. Even before he moved to California, Ryan wasn't happy in Rivertowne. In 2011, at the age of 21, he had just graduated from state university, and he couldn't find a job in his home area with his Communications degree. He had a job at a local music store, but it only paid \$10 an hour.

With several other considerations, like dating opportunities and career options working against him, he decided to leave everything and move to Los Angeles. He did so in part due to the suggestions of friends and people he knew online. Several friends from out of state recommended that he at least try the West Coast for a little while. Worst case scenario: he could always move back home.

The first year in Los Angeles was a little rough. He found his first apartment on Craigslist, and it ended up being in a rougher area than expected. He spent hours sending out resumes to every movie studio, recording studio, newspaper, TV station, production house, graphic design studio, and any other media production firms that he could find. While in this process, he ended up just getting a job at an Apple store. It wasn't glamorous, but it provided some income, enough to live modestly out west. Two months later, he moved to another apartment that was also small, but in a nicer building and neighborhood. Soon, he started meeting some good friends.

He always kept in touch with his family and friends back on the East Coast, but he lost a lot of personal contacts. Before long, he was only connected with his mom Pamela, his dad Randy, and his younger sister Madison. Life can get very busy in a city like LA, and he drifted away from his Delaware friends as his life moved on. Most of his old acquaintances were on FacePage, but he was one of the few who avoided it, preferring Tweeter and Quickgram instead.

The first Thanksgiving away from home was a little rough, but Ryan managed to get through it with the help of friends in the city who were in the same situation. With rising airfare costs, not everyone can hop on a plane every other week. That Christmas, he was considering going home, but he decided not to. He was waiting for another opportunity to have a job interview that ended up falling through. Again, he just spent the holiday with

friends. The first time is always the hardest, but Christmas had never been his favorite holiday and, as an atheist, it wasn't the most special to him even though the rest of his family were Christians.

Ryan finally got his first major job in the industry after living in Los Angeles for three years.. A friend of his was a designer for a local amusement park, and managed to get him an interview as a production manager. Up until this point, he had the job at an Apple store, a few side gigs as a production assistant for a few commercials, and wedding videos on some weekends. This would be a real full-time job in the industry with great pay at union scale. He managed to land the position.

Even with higher and more steady income, Ryan always seemed stuck in Los Angeles, especially with the amusement park staying incredibly busy around the holiday season. He would always video chat with his family on Christmas, and they would always wish that he could be there with them that day.

Unfortunately, in 2014, Randy and Pamela announced that they were getting a divorce after 24 years of marriage. This hit Ryan very hard as he thought divorce was something that people were supposed to do when their kids were young. He figured that after the 20-year mark his parents would be together forever.

From what he understood, his parents hadn't been unfaithful, but were splitting up because of their constant fights about money, lack of attraction, and seemingly falling out of love. It wasn't that their family was always poor. Randy held an executive position at a mortgage company for years in Wilmington, until the economic crash of 2007 forced the company to close. Unable to find another job paying six-figures, Randy was forced to take a job that paid only one fourth of what he used to earn. Although this was a major setback, it wasn't until years later that it finally took its toll on Randy and Pamela's marriage.

They separated, and Randy moved into a townhouse in Wilmington while Pamela stayed in the house they had built as a family together thirty miles away from the city. Ryan was still in a state of shock and spent a lot of time

on the phone with his sister who admitted she was crying a lot about the situation. After this, Ryan realized that he had just missed his chance to spend one last Christmas with his intact family, and that was a big reason he'd accepted his mom's offer to visit this year.

He knew things wouldn't be the same without his Dad there, but of course he planned going to visit him while he was there. Madison was 19-years-old, and attended the local state university. She would be home as well this Christmas. He was under the impression that it would be way different seeing his 19-year-old sister in person after so many years. Video chat and pictures were just not like getting together in real-life.

"Thanks love. Yeah, I'm happy to go back. It's just that a lot has changed," said Ryan.

Zoe smiled, "Your family is going to be very happy to see you, and it will give you a little break before starting grad school."

Ryan replied, "That's true."

"I'm SO glad this semester is over," Zoe complained.

"You have seemed very stressed," Ryan said while moving his hand along Zoe's thigh.

"Just until May...then this is all over, and I can start working finally!" she said before taking a drink of her wine.

"When are you heading back to your parents' house?" asked Ryan, wondering about Zoe's two-hour drive up the interstate.

"Probably just on Thursday, I figure three days there should be enough, but I know my mom will want to do a bunch of things while I am there. It's a shame we aren't even going to be able to ring in the New Year together."

Ryan paused, “Yeah, I know. Since this is my first time back in so long, I figure two weeks should be a good amount of time there. But we can call each other then and say Happy New Year! Surely 2016 is going to be a great year for both of us with many changes.”

CHAPTER TWO

Homecoming

Seeing his mom cry after not seeing her for four years made Ryan get teary-eyed himself. As they embraced each other in the airport, Ryan's 'little' sister Madison stood by waiting for her turn to get a hug.

Pamela hesitantly let go of her son and said, "I've missed you so much!" before drying her tears.

Madison threw her arms around her brother and squeezed him tightly. The last time Ryan saw her, she was a 90 pound 15-year-old girl. Now at 19, she had put on a little weight, and was proportionate in all places. She wouldn't be considered chubby, but wasn't stick thin either. Her 34C breasts were a massive improvement over her former A cups, Ryan notice, although that was the last thing on his mind. Madison had grown about six inches since the last time he saw her, and she was now only about three inches shorter than his 5'11" stature.

"God, you look so different!" Madison said.

"Yeah, you do too!" replied Ryan. "All grown up now!"

"Happy to be back?" asked Madison.

"Of course, it has been such a long time," replied Ryan.

Pamela smiled slightly, "A lot has changed.... You have been missed here, but I know you made the right decision by going out there and living your dreams."

Ryan had his problems in California, and had discussed them with his mom before. Particularly during the first few years when it was rough finding a suitable apartment or landing a decent job. His current problems involved paying off some debt and trying to advance in his career, but he was much happier than before. He loved Zoe, and the thought of getting engaged to her

once she finished pharmacy school made him smile widely.

His mom was almost always silent about her outside activities, and only mentioned the same old at work, how other people were doing, and other minutiae. Madison was now a sophomore at UD, which she celebrated by wearing a blue Delaware hoodie with yellow writing across the front.

Grabbing his bag from the ground, Ryan made his way toward the exit with his family while continuing the small talk. As soon as they hit the exit, Ryan got his second welcome back to the east coast.

“Damn it is cold here!” Ryan complained as the winter air hit his face and tousled his brown hair.

Madison laughed, “What are you talking about? This is one of the warmest Decembers we have had in years.”

Ryan replied, “Try living in Southern California for a while. Warm there all the time!”

“I wish!” explained Madison as she flipped her dirty blonde hair.

Pamela smiled as she walked her reunited children back to the car. “I wish I could visit out there sometime.”

“You would love it Mom. Have you even seen a palm tree since our trip down south?” said Ryan.

“No. The furthest I have even gone in the last few years or so is down to Rehoboth Beach,” Pamela said.

“I’m trying to get to Mexico for Spring Break next year,” said Madison. “The beaches here are too cold.”

Ryan remembered that it had been a while since he had seen an east coast beach. Even though he was only a short drive away from them growing up, it wasn’t one of his favorite hang outs. Yet being on the West Coast called for it

in certain situations. Zoe was big into surfing and stand-up paddle boarding, and she'd talked him into joining her in those activities a few times.

Madison spoke again, "Have you talked to Dad recently?"

"Yesterday, yeah. He said you are coming over Christmas night right?"

Madison replied, "Yeah, I can drive you there since you obviously don't have a car here."

"Great, I haven't seen him in what feels like forever as well," said Ryan. "Oh mom, you still talk to him right?"

"Yes, honey. Even though we are no longer together, we still keep in touch. We were just talking about you coming back last week and some things about college for Madison."

"Really?" Madison interrupted at this unexpected news.

Pamela gave a half smile, "Yes Madison. We are just making sure you are on the right path."

"Of course I am. I'm doing nursing! There will always be jobs as long as people keep getting sick."

"Lucky," said Ryan knowing Madison was in a slightly more lucrative field than he was, especially after he'd struggled in the entertainment industry for so long. He had memories of his days at UD, but they didn't seem as vibrant as when Madison talked about her experiences.

The family got inside of Pamela's 2007 Chevy Impala. Ryan remembered the car very well and couldn't believe his mom was still driving it. "Wow Mom, you still have this car?"

"Yeah, she's been very good to me!" replied Pamela as she unlocked the car by putting the key in the door, as the electronic key didn't work anymore.

“I was able to buy a Dodge with some savings last year. That old Honda I had finally gave out when I was turning into a neighborhood last year, and luckily not on the freeway,” Ryan said.

“Thank God!” Pamela responded, worrying about her son’s safety.

The family made their way out of Philadelphia International Airport and headed south to their house. Upon arriving, Ryan felt a wave of nostalgia as he saw the house he grew up in for the first time in years. It was early evening and slightly dark, but he noticed some of the paint on the front had come off, and a few trees that once stood there were gone.

“Welcome home!” Madison said from the backseat.

Ryan gave a slight smile and opened his door.

“Make yourself at home!” Pamela cheered as she opened the front door. Some of the furnishings had not changed since Ryan graduated college in 2011. He noted a few new wall decorations, and realized the house still had the same smell. Pamela took off her jacket while Madison petted the family dog, Scrappy. The dog was adopted by Madison while Ryan was just leaving for California, so he only had vague memories of the Jack Russell terrier.

“Do you want me to make some hot cocoa?” asked Pamela.

“Yeah, that would be great Mom!” said Ryan.

“Okay, I’ll get started on that. Your room is still your room if you want to take your things up there.”

Walking up the stairs, Ryan felt enthused to see his old room. It was the place where he spent most of his time in his teenage years, playing guitar and messing with his old girlfriend, Courtney. While in college, he didn’t change much except for taking down some posters of bands and upgrading the desk.

Opening the door, he saw his bed was still there along with the same old dresser. Some of the decorations had not changed, but there were loads of

packed boxes in the room for some reason, leaving little room to walk around. After putting down his bag, he came back downstairs to enjoy more time with his family. During his walk, he received a text message:

Still good for tonight?

Ryan responded:

Yeah, pick me up in like an hour please.

Madison asked him, “Do you want to go to the movies or something later tonight?”

“That sounds fun, but I’m meeting up with Alex.”

Madison had a shocked look on her face. “Umm Ryan... are you sure?”

Ryan questioned his sister’s motion, “What do you mean? He’s a long-time friend, and I haven’t seen him in years.”

His sister hesitated, “I’ve just heard things...”

“Like what?” he asked.

“Never mind. Have fun!” she said, after pausing for an awkward moment.

‘Weird...’ Ryan thought to himself. He then spoke to Madison out loud, “Too bad you aren’t 21 yet. Although this is guy’s night, it would be unique to drink at a bar with my little sister!”

“Gosh, I can’t wait!” said Madison. “Although that won’t stop us from drinking at home,” she laughed.

“Shots for Christmas?” Ryan asked, laughing.

The siblings made their way to the kitchen with Scrappy following behind. Pamela turned to them, “Ryan, did I overhear that you are going out tonight?”

“Yeah,” he said.

“Not wasting any time here I see,” she said.

“I need a drink after that long flight...stronger than hot cocoa anyway. I’m going to hang out with Alex. He’s going to pick me up in like an hour.”

“Okay, well call me if you need anything.”

CHAPTER THREE

Meeting up with Friend

Alex pulled up to Ryan's house in a 2009 Crown Victoria and sent a text to Ryan letting him know he was waiting outside. Shortly, Ryan smiled as he approached the car.

"What's up man?! Haven't seen you in forever!" said Alex as Ryan got in his car. The two exchanged a handshake and Ryan put his seatbelt on shuffling his feet over the trash on the bottom of the passenger seat. It was filled with various fast-food bags, cups, and empty cigarette packs.

"A lot bro. Things are going great in California, my career got better and I have a cool girlfriend who is about to graduate with a PharmD. What about you?"

"Nothing much," said Alex as he put the car into reverse. Ryan noticed that Alex had more crow's feet around his eyes than he used to, and he had lost a bit of weight since he last saw him.

The two planned to grab a few drinks at the Red Fish Tavern in town. During the drive, Ryan was that Alex had not aged well over the last few years. All this made Ryan wonder if Alex had a problem with drugs. Coughing at the smoke from Alex's two Newport cigarettes, Ryan didn't say anything but just rolled the window down.

Alex hadn't had much to say either. His responses seemed short, and from what he had learned, Alex was still working at the local Wal-Mart. He never seemed to be the ambitious type, but Ryan found it odd that he had never tried to find anything better. He seemed very set in his ways.

Alex mentioned a girlfriend by the name of Amy Taylor. Ryan remembered her. Before he quit using FacePage, he remembered that she had three kids by the time she was 22-years-old and never seemed to post anything about her job. Her posts were always either pictures of her children, stupid memes, or starting drama with someone causing issues in her life. She seemed like the

complete opposite of his girlfriend Zoe who was highly-driven, smart, and had goals in life. If Ann is anything like she used to be, Ryan was not sure why Alex would choose her to be in a relationship with.

“Before we get to the bar, I need to stop and get another pack of cigarettes,” said Alex.

“Just out of curiosity, how much do you smoke?” asked Ryan.

“Not much, maybe a pack a day. More if I’m drinking,” responded Alex.

“Have you thought about quitting? It’s been about three years since I smoked,” said Ryan.

“Yeah I will at some point,” responded Alex whose dark brown hair was still somewhat long from his teenage days.

Ryan sat in silence as Alex pulled the car into the parking lot of a gas station. Looking around, Ryan noted where they were.

“Dude, isn’t this the corner of Route 2 and Herring?”

“Yup,” replied Alex.

“Then where the fuck is Mister B’s Diner?!” Ryan asked.

Alex replied, “Oh, no one told you? That place closed like three years ago. They tore it down and now WaWa is here.”

“What?! Why didn’t anyone tell me! That place was legendary! I was actually hoping to go back there while I was back! So many memories there....” Ryan complained, very disappointed at the loss.

“Yeah, it sucks man. A lot of things have changed since you’ve been gone,” Alex explained

Ryan was dumbfounded. “What else has changed?”

“You’ll see when we get downtown,” replied Alex.

“Shit. We used to hang out at Mister B’s all the time.... Went there after band practices. Had my first date there.... Do you remember that time someone got glued to the toilet seat, and someone blamed me for doing it? I can’t believe I’ll never eat there again.”

“You can get a Shorti sub here for about four dollars, but that’s about as close as you’ll get to Mr. B’s unfortunately,” said Alex. “Let’s go inside.”

“We don’t have these out on the West Coast. Have heard about them before though,” said Ryan as they walked back to the car.

“Yeah, this is my new go-to spot for gas, coffee, and other shit. Miss the days of going to Mister Bob’s for real. Nowhere around here anymore that is anything like that,” said Alex as he rolled up the sleeves of his green Under Armor jacket.

“Ah, yes. I just remembered how East Coast people love gas stations,” Ryan said with a laugh.

“They seem to be the center of communities now!” said Alex.

Driving down Main Street, Ryan noticed the dismal Christmas decorations on the light posts. They seemed to be the same, worn-down decorations that the town had been using for decades. Very few buildings had any Christmas lights on them, other than a chain hardware store and the bar that he could see in the distance. Some other businesses that were once thriving seemed to be vacant as well.

“What happened to Rivertowne?!” asked Ryan, getting a macabre glimpse of his hometown.

Alex said, “This place isn’t the same anymore. A lot of people lost jobs and stopped going out as much.”

“How did the town decline this much since I left?” asked Ryan.

“No idea. A lot of people we used to hang out with left town and moved to the city or out of state,” replied Alex.

“Yeah, I noticed that when I started to contact people about coming back. I know it was declining a bit when I left in 2011, but damn man, this town has fallen hard in the last few years,” said Ryan.

Alex turned his head to look at Ryan, “We might see a few people at the bar that we know.”

“I imagine it may be busy for Christmas Eve Eve,” said Ryan.

“Think again,” says Alex as he signaled to the bar on the left. The open sign was on, but there were only five people inside.

CHAPTER FOUR

Christmas Eve 2015

Ryan woke up on Christmas Eve with a hangover from doing too many whiskey and gingers along with too many Jägerbombs. The bar the night prior was mostly dead, and his conversation with Alex was casual at best. Alex seemed to hold his own with alcohol and only mentioned the past rather than his current situation. Ryan didn't recognize the other locals at the bar. The bartender was an upperclassman when they were in high school and only gave a brief 'I remember you' to them. So far, the trip back had not been a good trip down memory lane.

Ryan could hear Christmas music and some dialogue from a TV downstairs as the smell of bacon and eggs wafted into his room. Hesitantly, he awoke and threw on some pajama pants to head downstairs without checking himself in the mirror or combing his hair.

"Good morning!" said Pamela, who was wearing a business outfit as she had to work on Christmas Eve.

"Hi Mom," he replied. Ryan noticed Madison was on her laptop and drinking coffee.

"Did you have fun last night?" asked Pamela.

Ryan hesitated, "It was okay. Seems like this town isn't what I remember."

Pamela paused, "Yeah, things haven't been too great lately. I blame the city council, but there are a number of factors going into the equation."

"This town SUCKS!" said Madison, hearing the conversation.

Pamela turned to Madison with a withering look, but did not say anything.

"I figured that much," said Ryan. "It seemed to be going downhill when I left since I couldn't find a job. Of course, the economy sucked, but I didn't think

it would be this bad.”

“Oh, you don’t know....” said Pamela.

Madison looked worried and turned to her brother but didn’t say anything.

“What do you have planned today?” Ryan said turning to his sister.

“Nothing,” she responded.

“Want to take me up on that movie offer?” he asked.

“Sure!” she responded.

Ryan enjoyed the afternoon with his sister watching a comedy at the theater and grabbing lunch at a nearby restaurant. Even though things had not been looking good here at home, his sister provided a guiding light. He found that she was a determined young woman who had goals in life. Getting more personal, he found that she had been dating some guy named Jason who was a business major, and she hoped to get an apartment closer to campus next year, once she saved enough from working over the summer at one of the outlets.

Madison seemed impressed with her brother’s choices in life and considered making the move across the country herself, although she didn’t want to leave her mom all alone in an instantly empty nest, and she didn’t know anyone out there other than her brother.

As night fell, Ryan and Madison joined their mother for Christmas Eve dinner. Ryan had noticed she had lit up a small tree this year with white lights and a few ornaments from Ryan and Madison’s childhood, along with some contemporary decorations. He made a mental note to take the small gifts from his bag and place them under the tree before the end of the night.

The scent of honey ham filled the air, and Ryan was craving his mom's home cooking. He filled his plate with ham, potatoes, shrimp, green beans, and a piece of bread. Madison smiled as she eyed her next item while Pamela lit two candles on the dining room table.

"Where is your boyfriend?" asked Ryan.

Madison looked at her brother and replied, "He couldn't make it tonight because he's a few hours away visiting family, but we are getting together tomorrow night."

"Great, I would like to meet him at some point while I'm here."

For the next thirty minutes, the family casually enjoyed their meal, sharing stories mostly of the past with the topic changing to current TV shows and movies occasionally.

Later, Ryan turned his attention to his mother, "Oh I meant to ask you. What are all those boxes in my room?"

There was silence in the room for a few seconds other than the background Christmas music coming from the other room.

Madison took the initiative of speaking up, "... You didn't tell him?..."

Pamela's eyes continued to look down, and she chewed the last remaining portion of food in her mouth thinking of what to say.

"Tell me what?" asked Ryan.

Pamela finally said something after adjusting her glasses, "Let's enjoy Christmas Eve together and talk about it another time."

"Come on Mom; I know that look on your face. You can tell me anything," Ryan tried reasoning.

Madison sat there with a ‘tell him or I will’ look on her face.

Pamela gave a small fake smile, “We have to move by the end of next month.”

“WHAT?!” Ryan screamed. “Why?”

“I am months behind on the mortgage payments. I went from going full-time at the office to part-time earlier this year, and have been unsuccessful in finding another job. That, and with health insurance going up, I just can’t get ahead. Actually I am falling too far behind,” Pamela explained.

“But we grew up here.... Isn’t this house paid off?” asked Ryan.

“Far from it, and I need about \$50,000 just to get back up and running,” said Pamela.

Ryan tried to reason, “If I had that I would give it to you.”

Pamela smiled, “That would be very nice. I should have told you earlier, but I didn’t want you to stress about things back here.”

“Where are you going to move to?” asked Ryan.

“Maybe in with Aunt Annabelle for a while, unless I can find an apartment that I can afford with Madison,” said Pamela.

Madison spoke up, “Actually.... I’m thinking of moving in with Dad....”

Pamela stared blankly at Madison, as it was new news to her.

“Is there anything that can be done to solve this?” asked Ryan. “Do you think Dad would buy the house back?”

“Maybe you can try talking to him when you see him Ryan, but as far as I know, he has no interest in owning this house anymore,” Pamela explained.

“You know, it would be nice to actually get some good news,” Ryan complained.

Pamela looked at her son, “Ryan, no one is happy about this situation. I knew I should have waited to have this conversation.”

Ryan tried to control his emotions, “It just seems like nothing good is happening right now. So far, Madison seems to be the only one doing well.”

“Actually, because of finances, she is going to college only part-time for the next two semesters until we can get back on track. It’s a rough time, but we are glad you are back,” Pamela said trying to comfort him.

“I just have mixed feelings about all of this...” said Ryan.

CHAPTER FIVE

Merry Christmas, Happy Transformation

After another swig of his drink, Ryan laid his head back down on his pillow in his bedroom, turning his attention back to the Christmas movie about a corrupt Santa Claus that was playing on his laptop. He'd spent most of the night in casual conversation and chilling around the house, but he couldn't get his mind off of the events he had experienced and heard about since returning to Rivertowne. Looking at the clock, he noticed it was only about 11:35 p.m. although it felt much later. It was unlike him to feel this tired at this hour, but depression plus the alcohol was causing him to doze off.

He looked around the room again. Various boxes with no labels. Probably filled with old photos, blankets, books, and who knows what else from his childhood. This Christmas Eve did not feel as special as previous years.

Pamela was sleeping in her room after a long night. She had her doubts about making Ryan upset, but still saw some light in the future. Earlier in the night, she had enjoyed a few glasses of red white and sat in the living room watching TV, reminiscing about when times were simpler. Christmas was much more fun when the kids were younger, and she felt a bit of empty nest syndrome, even though Madison was still living with her...at least for the time being.

Madison was in her room on SnapTalk sending a few boob shots and other naughty selfies to her boyfriend. Seeing him was the number one thing on her mind, although she as hoping to get a few certain gifts she had asked for such as a new laptop and phone. She wasn't holding her breath, however, considering the financial troubles their mom was having.

Moving to her dad's house would mean being closer to the city, and hopefully some new opportunities. Maybe he would even pay for her to live near campus in her own apartment. She was going to turn 20 in January and wanted to live away from her parents for a change. Madison had voiced her

concerns with Ryan when they were alone earlier in the day, and he agreed that it would be great for her independence.

Back in Ryan's bedroom, he had gotten out of bed briefly since the boxes had gotten the best of his slightly buzzed imagination. The first two boxes he scavenged through contained what he expected; old clothes, home furnishings, and a few curtains. Most of the contents of the first two boxes contained house stuff or personal items belonging to Pamela, but he found that the third box contained a few of Madison's things.

When Ryan first moved to California, he packed the car with as much as he could and had his parents ship a few items once he was out there. He'd left some of his stuff behind at the house, mostly things that he didn't use too often or had forgotten about. After seeing a few things belonging to Madison in the boxes, he put the lid back on and looked around in various boxes trying to find some of his old stuff that wasn't in the closet.

After a few tries, he opened a box containing a few books he owned years ago, and some magazines from 2010. Ryan ran his fingers through the top of the materials to quickly browse the titles of the books. Some were guitar tablature books while others were strategy guides for video games he had not played in years. Near the end of the collection, he was surprised to see a book titled 'Rivertowne High School' with 2007 written in a bold typeface. That was his senior year of high school.

He pulled out the yearbook and placed it on his bed, planning to look through it. Going back to the box, he found a few others there including his 2006 and 2005 yearbooks. 2005 was a very memorable year. It was when he had his first real band called Splitting the Horror, and had his first girlfriend, a cute redhead named Sammie who wore plaid skirts and black nylons a lot.

Although he also saw the 2004 book from freshman year, he opened the 2005 book and started browsing through it, seeing old familiar faces and people he had long forgotten about. In the back section, he saw a few signatures from friends and acquaintances from school. He wasn't the popular type, but was

mostly friends with scene and emo kids. There was a few dozen of them.

Rivertowne High School wasn't a stereotypical high school with a bunch of cliches; but many students were stuck in their ways and kept within their groups. Turning back a few pages, he saw a photo of himself playing in the high school marching band, and noticed Alex was next to him playing snare drum.

Instantly he had the memory of seeing Alex last night and how it seemed like he had given up, even though they were only in their mid-20s. Back then, he and Alex thought they were going to get signed to Winning Records and play the Cars Tangled Tour like all their favorite bands. If somehow playing in a band didn't work out, they wanted to stay in the industry. That partially came true for Ryan, but Alex had never left the area, and seemed to be fated to never make more than \$15 an hour. Just another reminder that everything had gone to shit since he left.

Ryan closed the yearbook and grabbed the others. Losing the mood to look through them now and getting very tired, he placed them on the dresser nearby. He planned to look through them some time while he was in town. He made his way back to the bed to lay down, wearing boxers, pajama pants, and a black undershirt. He closed his laptop and plugged his phone into the charger on the nightstand.

Although sleepiness was affecting him, Ryan couldn't shake the effects of the last two days. He got under the covers, then checked his e-mail and a social media site on his phone to try to relax and take his mind off things.

Even though he was glad to be back home, this had not been a very good Christmas Eve. He remembered even when he was a teen; he was excited on Christmas Eve, eager for presents and a ton of food that his mom prepared for everyone. He assumed that the traditional home buffet would not be happening this year, and after opening presents in the morning, he didn't know what the plan was for the time before they went to his dad's house.

Ryan gazed out the window into the December sky. Their house was far enough away from a major city and other light sources that there was a clear

view of the stars. He could make out Ursa Major but not too many others in the sky. He was hoping for a bit of snow this Christmas since he had not experienced a winter wonderland in quite a long time. It was surely not going to snow in Los Angeles anytime soon.

Ryan felt depressed. Even dinner with the family and watching Christmas movies didn't seem the same. It was almost as if there wasn't any holiday spirit left, not that it even felt like Christmas because of the higher than usual temperature outside for that time of year in the Mid-Atlantic.

He continued to gaze at the stars in the sky, noticing one that was much brighter than the others, and tried to relax his mind. Something just didn't feel right. Needing to get his feelings out of his system, he said out loud, albeit in a low tone: "I wish things could be like they were before again. Back when everyone was happy. Too much has changed and there needs to be a change for the better."

Ryan continued to gaze out the window for a few more seconds before his body gave out and he fell asleep putting his mind to rest. As soon as Ryan was asleep, the Christmas star in the sky started to pulsate. It was midnight and officially Christmas. There was a gust of wind which made a loud sound brushing through the trees in the backyard, but that was not loud enough to wake him.

A burst of the cold air leaked into the window sill. It was filled with something that resembled glitter. A pink mist from the wind formed and grew larger. It was odorless, and continued to expand throughout the room. Becoming thicker, parts of the mist started touching Ryan's body, although he could not feel a thing.

The mist of Christmas spirit started to enter his nostrils and flowed over his skin. During the next few minutes, the mist spread through Ryan's nervous, respiratory, and circulatory systems. Parts of the chromosomes inside of his cells started to morph in shape, expanding one part of them.

On the outside of his body, the mist closely covered all of his skin, creeping inside of his clothes as well. It created a depilatory effect that shortened his

arm hair and made it thinner. Although he did not have much facial hair in the first place, it had been two days since he had shaved. Still, the mist was taking care of that as well. His arm pit hair started to recede back into his body along with that chest hair that not even Zoe was a fan of.

Continuing the trend of leaving him virtually hairless below the nose, his pubic area began to have fresh landscaping as the hairs, becoming shorter or literally disappearing into thin air. It looked like he had just shaved his legs, even though some women do not do that in winter, let alone men who are not swimming or biking regularly. Even the hair on his feet ceased to exist.

Finally, with the true Christmas spirit inside of him, Ryan's body continued to rewrite his DNA. This caused his body to start shrinking due to cell changes in his bones as well as other places. Over the next hour, his body slowly shrunk from 5'11" to about seven inches shorter. His clothes did not change in the process, becoming baggy on his body.

While his height was decreasing, other parts of his body started to change their shape. His shoulders became much less broad and his waist shrunk in size. Pelvic changes started, as his hips became slightly wider. Over the course of this transformation, his weight had changed from 180 pounds to only about 110. This weight change could be credited to the muscle mass of his body decreasing.

In the course of just an hour, all of the time he had spent at the gym over the last few years had been more than reversed. His biceps and triceps became tinier. Ryan now had an hourglass figure, with a new slim waist and wider hips. His chest remained largely unchanged, however his thighs changed shape becoming thinner in some areas but thicker up to the back of his butt which was now expanding slightly.

Ryan's hands were now hairless as well and rapidly changing to become slimmer and much smaller. His fingernails started to look cleaner with even shapes, and they took on a new color. Other parts of his hands were refined as a similar action happened to his feet. Ryan's feet were shrinking and becoming much narrower. Several tendons around his heels were changing, which would create a new way of walking in combination with his new

weight distribution.

As the night continued, so did the changes to Ryan's body. His skin had become much smoother and his throat underwent a trachea regression. Ryan's larynx began shifting, causing him to have a higher voice. Changes throughout his neck and mouth continued upward as his face became feminine and his teeth began shrinking and straightening, as if he had just finished wearing braces. They were whiter too, showing no signs of his alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco use.

His nose started to change, looking more like the one sported by Pamela and Madison than like his dad's. His cheekbones started to expand, and his face became rounder as it lost the oval shape that gave him a big forehead before. The cellular restructuring caused a few lines to go away, making him look several years younger. Ryan's ears and lips also changed, leaving him with a completely new body.

While the transformations were occurring over night, Ryan's mind remained untouched. He was dreaming about something, whether it was a sex dream or something with sugar plums...whatever those are. The last change to Ryan's head was his hair. It started to grow at a rapid rate over the next hour, crawling down his head and onto the pillow creating somewhat of a mess. It stopped just a little passed his nipples.

More pink mist surrounded his hair causing it to start changing from a dark brown shade to a reddish, chestnut brown color with caramel highlights. His hair was slightly thicker than before and healthier thanks to the moisturizing mist.

Ryan turned in his sleep, still unaware of the physical changes that were taking place. The pink mist moved under his shirt and began changing his chest. First, his areola started to enlarge, and the interlobular adipose tissue started to expand. More estrogen found its way through his body, causing chemical reactions that accelerated his breast growth. Slowly, they expanded outward, and his nipples enlarged as well. Breast growth is supposed to happen over a few years, but in the course of an hour, Ryan had grown C-cup breasts.

To finalize the changes, Ryan's penis was becoming much softer and tinier. On his scrotum, the skin started to hug the rest of his body tightly, shrinking his testicles in the process. The shaft of his penis continued to weaken as it pulled into his body and shrank to only a few millimeters long. A vagina started to form consisting of a urethral opening, paraurethral ducts, labium minora and majora, Bartholin gland, and prepuce that surrounded his shrinking dick which was turning into his new clitoris.

Internally, a cervix was forming, along with a canal leading to a new reproduction system. Ryan's uterus was magically making its new home in his body, complete with fallopian tubes and ovaries. Miraculously, he managed to sleep through the entire transformation, which made him a completely genetic female.

The pink mist was not finished with its magic, however. It surrounded his entire body, causing his clothes to start changing. His pajama pants, which were blue flannel, became a light pink and had cartoon reindeer and other Christmas characters on them with a black font on the back of his butt that said, 'Naughty or Nice?' His CK boxers started to change, first with the waistband turning into lace and the fabric on the back hugging his new bubble butt a lot tighter. It turned into a thong while the front covered his new vagina. The shirt he was wearing changed to a softer cotton material and tightly hugged his new breasts, as he wasn't wearing a bra. His slim shoulders now showed a little more thanks to the girly cut of the design.

Some pink blots in the mist became white, and an array of other colors appeared as the mist expanded. It became thicker and started to embrace the entire room, escaping under the door as well and leaking through the entire house. After another hour, it started to fade away, leaving sleeping beauty undisturbed despite her drastic transition.

By 7:30 a.m. the pink mist was completely gone. Ryan laid there still asleep until his door swung open and then closed.

"WAKE UP! WAKE UP!" shouted a high-pitched familiar, but still unidentifiable voice. "IT'S CHRISTMAS AND SANTA CAME! HAHA!"

Ryan felt extremely dizzy and was barely able to open his eyes. Figuring the presents would be there no matter when he woke up, he didn't bother moving and went straight back to sleep instead.

The voice yelled at him again, "FINE! I'LL START MYSELF!!! WAKY WAKY!" The person swung open the door again, causing Ryan to hear some other noise coming from downstairs.

Rolling around, unable to fall back asleep, Ryan had the foreign feeling of hair hitting his face. Confused, he opened his eyes. He gasped at the shock of not only his long hair but also the pink sheets and a zebra patterned blanket he was wrapped in.

There were more pillows on the bed, although he didn't care to think of the design at the moment. He wiped his eyes and examined the room. He was no longer in his bedroom. While it had the same construction and fixtures, the entire room was decorated differently than it ever had been before and all of the boxes were gone. Not paying attention to details other than the girly pastel colors on the wall, giant dresser, and vanity, Ryan looked down, seeing his newly shaped body and his breasts for the first time.

"WHAT THE FUCK!!!!" Ryan screamed loud enough to wake up anyone else who was in the house. He grabbed his throat now realizing that his voice had changed as well, and noticing how soft his skin was.

Getting out of bed, he ignored the mirror on the other side of the room and instead started running toward the bathroom. His new body weight distribution and other feminine features made him stumble at first. He was used to being tall and skinny, not rather short and curvy in places. That plus the shorter legs, smaller feet, and tendon and muscle redesign threw him off balance. He made his way to the bathroom, not paying attention to the footsteps from the stairway.

Entering the bathroom, Ryan noticed that it too had been completely redesigned. There were far more makeup products than he had seen last night, and there were lotion and soap bottles everywhere. He also saw female

clothes, including a leopard print bra on the bathroom floor, indicating that Madison probably didn't clean up last night.

Ryan looked in the mirror and started to freak out even more. His reflection showed a girl roughly 15 or 16 years old. She had similar facial features as Pamela and Madison, including very high cheekbones and plump lips. Ryan pulled on his long hair, and the pain confirmed that it actually did belong to him. Filled with distress, Ryan's heart started racing, and tears started falling. Suddenly, a woman's voice greeted Ryan at the door.

RACHEL, what is wrong?"

RACHEL turned to her and saw that it was **HER** mom. She wore a red Christmas sweater and black slacks. Her hair was longer than before, and she wasn't wearing glasses like she had been recently. Her skin even looked younger and smoother.

Trying to find the words to explain this impossible situation, Rachel gasped for air and finally started speaking, "I turned I turned... I'm a..." With her heart racing even more, Rachel felt a strong shot of nerves hit her brain. Her vision turned to black as she fell to the ground.

CHAPTER SIX

Christmas Day Surprise

Over the course of the next two hours, Rachel reached various states of consciousness. She could not make out all of the dialogue in the room but heard the sounds of women, men, beeps, and other noises.

My name is Ryan...

... I'm a man...

This must be a dream...

Around 10:35 a.m., Rachel awoke and was able to see her mom in the room. It was apparent that she was in the hospital, as she was laying in bed hooked up to a monitor. She rubbed her eyes and could feel her long hair getting in the way. The hospital gown was a step up from the girly clothes she had on before, but that was the least of her worries.

“Oh great, honey, you are awake!” said Pamela.

“Mom...what happened?” Rachel said, still very cautious about the situation.

Pamela hit a button on a remote next to her chair. “I didn’t think this is how we would be spending Christmas morning,” she joked. “You fainted in the bathroom. We had to carry you to the car and rush you to the hospital. You have been in and out of it for the last two hours or so, and have been muttering some pretty strange things. I just paged the nurse to come and check on you.”

Rachel laid there and looked at the monitor that was tracking her heart rate and other vitals. The name on the screen said ‘Sutton, Rachel. DOB: 05/20/1990. Gender: F.’ The only true thing on the monitor being her birthdate. “Mom...something is wrong. I’m a girl! Why do you keep acting like I just fainted?! This is insane. You look different as well.”

Pausing for a moment, Pamela took a breath and questioned her daughter, “How do I look different?”

“You look younger...your hair is darker, your skin is smoother, and you aren’t wearing glasses,” said Rachel.

Pamela looked blankly at Rachel, “Honey, this is all coming out of nowhere. Have you been watching scary movies late at night again?”

“Mom, this is seriously very weird.... It has to be fixed,” Rachel said before being interrupted by a nurse entering the room.

The chubby blonde nurse was wearing navy blue scrubs with her hair in a ponytail. She smiled and said, “Oh, nice to see you are awake Missy!” She turned her attention to Pamela, “Is everything okay?”

Pamela smiled, “Yes, Dr. Davis mentioned to page help when she woke up.”

Rachel sat in the bed very uncomfortable that others were referring to her as female.

“Of course,” said the nurse who checked some stats on the monitor and wrote them on a sheet. “I will page him right away.” She left the room, leaving Pamela and Rachel alone again.

“I’m telling you Mom; something is wrong. I don’t know what happened but last night I was watching movies with Madison and then went upstairs. Had a few drinks and watched some other stuff then went through those boxes for a bit to see what was packed for the move. Then I woke up and looked like this!” said Rachel.

Pamela was confused by almost all of her statement, “You were drinking last night?!”

“Yeah, why not?”

Pamela gave her daughter a very concerned look, “I wonder if that is one of

the reasons for this....”

Dr. Davis made his way into the room. He was wearing khakis and a white doctor’s coat. He smiled wide, “Merry Christmas, Rachel. We are happy you are awake finally. How are you feeling?”

Rachel threw her arms out slight, “Doctor! How do you explain why I just got a sex change?!”

Dr. Davis and Pamela looked at her baffled. “I see some of the cognitive issues are still there,” he replied looking at his chart.

Rachel’s mom spoke up, “Rachel just admitted to me that she had a few drinks last night. Would that have something to do with it?”

Dr. Davis shook his head, “Judging by the fluid levels; there were no signs of drugs in her system although it did pick up some alcohol usage. The cause of fainting seems to be from extremely high blood pressure and a large hit of anxiety. Judging by the monitoring, it seems to be wearing off slightly now.”

“So she is going to be okay?” Pamela asked knowing her daughter had just lied to her about the alcohol consumption.

“Yes,” he smiled. “I want to run a few more tests, but you should be able to leave here in the next hour or so.”

“Oh wonderful,” said Pamela. “But what about the...mental state. Rachel keeps saying her name is Ryan and that she is a boy.”

“Because I am!” screeched Rachel.

Dr. Davis was confused as well, but tried to come up with a reasonable explanation. “That is one of those issues that I cannot diagnosis easily. Occasionally when people faint due to mixed levels of body chemistry, there is slight amnesia and other cognitive problems. Rachel is possibly showing some signs of dissociative identity disorder, but that is unlikely since this has only occurred since the collapse, and you said she was acting normally up

until this morning. I would like for you to come back in three days for a checkup, and again in one week.”

Rachel butted in, “No offense, but what does that have to do with the fact that I’m a girl?!”

Dr. Davis became more blunt, “Rachel, what exactly do you remember from yesterday?”

“I was just telling Mom. I wasn’t feeling good in the morning because of what Alex and I did on Christmas Eve Eve. Madison and I went to the movies and we talked about everything happening in life. Plus, I’m supposed to meet her boyfriend soon. Mom cooked dinner and that’s when it came out that she is losing the house. I watched a few movies upstairs, had a few drinks, went through boxes, and passed out. When I woke up, some little girl was yelling at me for some reason. I went to the bathroom, was shocked at my reflection, and then I saw Mom. I guess I fainted? Now I’m here.”

Pamela quickly spoke up, trying to hold back the emotions caused by her concern about the well-being of her daughter, “Rachel honey... none of that is true at all. We were at Grandmom’s most of the day, then we came back, and you had dinner with all of us, Aunt Annabelle, Uncle Joe, and your cousins Ashlee and Libby. You and Madison watched Elf with your cousins, but didn’t go to the theater. You just watched the DVD in the living room. Oh, and who is Alex?!”

“Mom, have you lost your mind?! For one, I haven’t seen any of that side of the family in like four years... and Grand Mom died a few years ago,” said Rachel in a rebuttal.

Still upset that Rachel had lost her memory, Pamela pulled out her cell phone and launched the picture gallery. Rachel wondered why her mom now had a flip phone. Taking it in her hand, Rachel saw a pixelated photo of Madison who looked like she was about 9 or 10 years old with a giant Christmas bow on her head. ‘Rachel’ was hugging her from behind with a wide smile, wearing a Santa Claus hat with her hair braided. Shocked at the image, Rachel said, “This must be a joke.... Where did you

even get this pic from? Who is that girl with Madison when she was young? Also, why in the hell do you have this old ass phone?”

Dr. Davis made a few more notes on his sheet.

“Rachel...that picture was taken yesterday,” said Pamela calmly.

“Madison looks like she did when she was 9, and who is that girl?” said Rachel.

Pamela became a little more frustrated, “Madison **is** nine-years-old honey....”

“Am I back in 2005?” asked Rachel sarcastically.

“It is December 25, 2005, Rachel...” Dr. Davis said.

“OH MY GOD!” screamed Rachel. Even more tension hit her as it was now apparent that she had not only changed genders but had also traveled back in time.

“Rachel, what year did you think it was?” asked Dr. Davis.

She almost didn’t answer him, fearing embarrassed, but thinking that it couldn’t get any worse she said, “2015....”

Pamela and Dr. Davis looked at her puzzled.

After a bit of silence, Dr. Davis said, “Rachel, while you had high-blood pressure, everything about you medically shows that you are a healthy young woman. Have you experienced any other memory loss lately?”

“No!” she answered.

“Okay, so this is a one-time occurrence. Pamela, since she is showing good vital signs and overall good health, I am still releasing her today. However I am going to refer her to a psychological specialist for next week. Please see

the specialist again if she continues to display signs of identity disorder. Please keep me updated.”

“Thank you, doctor,” replied Pamela. She then turned her attention to Rachel, “Are you feeling better at all Rachel?”

“No....” she replied.

“What’s wrong...?” asked Pamela.

“Everything....”

Pamela turned to the doctor, “Okay, she’s fine. Just let us know when we are able to leave after the next tests.”

During the ride home, Pamela continued lecturing Rachel, who was now back in her PJs, shirt, and a pink hoodie they grabbed for her. “Just remember, it is okay to talk to me about anything. You seemed very enthusiastic lately, which is why this episode is so surprising! It’s all coming out of nowhere. Has anything been stressing you out?”

“Mom, I’ve told you multiple times...I don’t know how I got back here or why I am back in time,” Rachel.

Pamela did not respond directly to her, and instead tried changing the subject. “Just think, there is a mountain of presents waiting for you back at the house! Hopefully, your sister didn’t open all of hers yet.”

It then came to Rachel’s mind that if she was truly back in time, and Madison was really nine-years-old again, that would mean her parents would still be together. Her dad must be back at the house with Madison. She tested this theory, “Have you told Dad anything yet?”

Pamela smiled, “Yes, I called him while you were sleeping, and then texted him after the last tests were done. I explained that there is nothing physically wrong with you, but that you have to go back in a few days. Hopefully, he will be more sensitive, so please watch your mouth around him.”

Rachel asked, "What do you mean?"

"You know your dad cares about you. Lately, though, you have been talking back a lot, and we do not appreciate it," said Pamela.

Rachel continued staring out the window; she noticed that some of the broken down buildings she'd passed the other night with Alex were restored. Occasionally, she caught a glimpse of herself in the side mirror. A reminder that she was now a teenage girl...and a pretty one at that. Natural beauty, especially since she did not have any makeup on at the moment.

A few minutes later, Pamela pulled the car up to the family house. It looked immaculate, just as Rachel remembered it from years ago. She noticed her dad's SUV from years ago in the driveway. Once the front door was open, Pamela announced, "We are back!"

Rachel heard the sounds of a dog running across hardwood floors as a golden retriever, Sparky, came greet them. Rachel had not seen the family dog since he died in 2010. It was one of many hints at the past to come throughout the day. Soon afterward, Rachel's dad Randy walked towards them. He was a slim man, about 6'1" tall. He had a light beard, and his hair was combed back. He was wearing slacks and a blue sweater. "Rachel honey, I'm so glad you are back," he said.

"DAD!!!" Rachel said as she embraced his hug. Even though she was a girl now, it felt great to see her dad again.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

Rachel responded, getting slightly teary-eyed, "Dad...this is all so confusing...."

"It's okay Rachel. It was just hiccup,"

"Dad...please help.... They couldn't do anything at the hospital, and I need to change...." suddenly, Rachel was interrupted by Madison who came

running up.

“Rachel! Look what I got!” Madison screamed out holding up a blue iPod mini.

“Madison!” Rachel screamed, shocked to see her younger sister age regressed.

Pamela looked at Madison, “Sweetie, Rachel wasn’t feeling well earlier. Aren’t you happy that she is back home safe?”

Madison grinned, “Oh yeah! Ready to open pressies?!” she asked Rachel.

Pamela placed her hand on Rachel’s right shoulder, comforting her. “You have a lot of presents, and that stocking is completely stuffed!” said Pamela.

Rachel looked around and noticed that her loving family seemed happy that she was home. Of course, she was still stuck in the past as a girl, but she felt like there was little she could do about that at the moment. As Ryan, she wasn’t stupid. He considered himself very educated.

At this point, Rachel realized that her family probably thought she was crazy. While she wanted to change back to Ryan immediately, she understood that wasn't happening for now. Rachel knew she would have to play along, so she responded, “Sure... I’ll open a few presents.”

As she sat by the fireplace, Rachel tried her best to remember Christmas 2005 as it originally happened. That was the year she (as Ryan) had asked for a new guitar and Xbox 360. ‘Ryan’ received both and for the next year, those were probably the most used personal items he'd owned.

She couldn’t remember exactly what her family was wearing, but it seemed similar. Many of the decorations in the living room had not changed either, although Rachel noticed some family photos on the walls had changed. She wondered, "How could the entire universe shift both in time and logistics

after a sex change and how could she have her sex changed literally over night?" None of this made any sense!

Preparing her Canon PowerShot camera, Pamela bent down to capture the moment as Randy handed Rachel a present. The box was quite large, and Rachel did not know what to expect. The bright flashes went off as Rachel opened the present and discovered it contained three Abercrombie & Fitch hoodies in pink, baby blue, and white. Pamela was wondering why she wasn't smiling. "Look happier honey! You asked for these just last week!"

Rachel, faked a smile, "Thanks Mom...."

Meanwhile, Madison continued digging under the tree. She pulled out a present that was wrapped in satin red paper with a giant golden bow on it. Pamela saw this and said, "Honey, I think you should wait till later to open that one."

"Mom, please!" Madison yelled out.

Randy looked over from the TV and said, "Go ahead, dear. May keep her occupied the rest of the day."

Pamela gave in and said, "Fine...go ahead, Madison." She then prepared her camera for pictures of her younger daughter.

Madison's face lit up as she tore into the gift. Her face gleamed in excitement as she saw the logo for Xbox 360.

"YAY!!!" Madison yelled out. "Thanks Mommy and Daddy!"

Rachel was confused and said, "*I* asked for that!"

Pamela looked at her oddly, as that item was definitely not on Rachel's list for the year, but she quickly came up with a solution. "I'm sure you both can share."

Judging by this action, Rachel wondered how much of the world had changed

since she was now female. It's not like the Xbox even had kid-friendly games when it first came out, so why Madison would get it instead?

Pamela could see the disappointment in Rachel's face, although she wasn't sure where it was coming from. To make her feel better, Pamela walked over to her elder daughter with another wrapped present. "This is your big gift for the year. I know it will probably make you feel much better today."

Rachel gave a half smile even though she was a little scared to open the present. Judging by the size of the box, it wasn't the Ibanez electric guitar that she received that year. She slowly started to open the package, but then gave in and ripped the front of the wrapping off to reveal a 17" Apple Powerbook G4.

There was some genuine astonishment in Rachel's face. She remembered that she had originally asked for one back in the original 2005 even though as Ryan, she knew her parents would not spend that much money on one gift. Had she become more spoiled now that she was a girl?

"Thanks so much! I love it!" said Rachel, still getting used to her girly voice. Her parents forced her to pose for a picture, and then she realized that she could use the device as a getaway. "I'm going to go upstairs for a bit and get it set up," said Rachel.

"Okay," Randy said, as he continued to fiddle with some wires on the TV attempting to set up the Xbox for Madison.

Rachel walked up the stairs, thinking she had not seen a Powerbook in years. All of the presents so far seemed dated by 2015 standards, but now she was back in time with knowledge of the future. What she needed to learn, though, was how and why she had been transported back in time, why she was a girl this time around and most importantly, how to undo these bizarre changes.

Entering her room, she began to explore. While avoiding the closet that was open and displaying a ton of girl clothes, shoes, heels, and accessories; she saw a few pictures on the top of the dresser and vanity. They ranged from ones hugging Madison at the beach (with Rachel in a bikini) to a picture that

said, 'Cheer Squad-Sophomore.' How in the hell was she now a cheerleader?

As a boy back in 2005, Ryan hated cheerleaders and the only thing 'he' liked about them was some were extremely hot. He was more into the Emo and Scene girls, though. The cheerleaders seemed to ignore him as well, putting up barriers in the social world of high school.

One of the girls in the pictures was Kirsten Bennett. As Rachel remembered her, Kirsten was one of the most popular and prettiest girls at the school. Rivertowne High was of modest size, with 800 to 900 students total.

Kirsten was the All-American type with a perfect body and blonde hair. Ryan had assumed she was a bitch, even though he didn't know much about her at all. The only thing that he knew was that her family had moved to Rivertowne from somewhere in Pennsylvania during the 8th grade. Ryan had no classes with her, and whenever he saw her in person, she seemed to only pay attention to her friends.

They were both in the same grade, and although she was new and only a sophomore, Kirsten seemed very active with cheerleading and various clubs. She was the face of many events. As Ryan, he never cared very much about school activities, and put his focus on things outside of school such as his band. Rachel wondered, "How much of my lifestyle and personality has changed, just because I have a vagina now?"

Hearing a cell blip, Rachel turned her attention to the nightstand and saw a blinking light. Walking over, she noticed the cellphone was the V by LG. A far cry from the iPhone 7 Ryan was used to. The text on the front screen was labeled 'Kirsten' and showed that it was sent an hour ago. It said:

OMG, I herd what happened. U OK?!

Rachel was apprehensive about replying, but opened the clunky phone to reveal the built-in QWERTY keyboard. She replied:

No. Something is wrong.

Less than 10 seconds after sending the message, she received a reply:

WHAT?!?!?!!!!

Rachel responded:

I have to tell u in person.

Rachel found it hard to text on the old phone and missed his easier to use and more advanced iPhone.

Kirsten replied:

Tonight?!

Rachel texted:

Sure.

Kirsten:

K. Hope U R Okay!

Rachel replied:

Yes physically. Let u know later.

Apparently, Rachel was going to see Kirsten later that night, although she still had no memory of a female life. She started to unbox the laptop and turned it on to start the setup process. While waiting for the computer to boot up, she walked over to the mirror and had another look at herself. Her hair was a mess, completely uncombed and tangled. Body sweat was showing in some places, and it was obvious she was not wearing a bra.

Having breasts was going to take some getting used to, and their weight had been bothering Rachel all day. Her lack of a penis provided a weird sensation down there, and her curiosity was getting the best of her. What bothered her

the most was how pretty she looked behind the blemishes. Her body was athletic but curvy in just the right spots. She debated taking a shower while the computer slowly booted up.

After putting some basic information into the Powerbook, Rachel made her way to the bathroom. She turned on the facet and looked for any shower gel that didn't have flowers or fruit on the bottle. Giving up, she snuck into her parent's bathroom to steal some of her dad's soap and shampoo. Taking the masculine items, she slipped back into the other shower.

Touching her own breasts proved to be extremely weird. Semi-freaking out, she tried to pretend they were not there, although that's hard to do when you are a size 32C. The longest her hair had ever been before was down to the shoulders, so Rachel found it more difficult to wash her much longer hair. She had to use more shampoo than usual and then wring it out like a washcloth. Grabbing two towels, she wrapped one around her waist and another over the top of her body. She brushed her teeth and made her way back to her bedroom.

'Ryan' didn't lose his virginity until he was 17. Girlfriends in high school didn't want to put out and 'he' rarely saw any of them in their underwear, much less naked. Looking inside Rachel's underwear drawer revealed what 15-year-old girls wear. There were a collection of boy shorts, thongs, and bikini panties.

Rachel chose the ones that most resembled unisex underwear, and she was still not ready to put on a bra. Going to her closet, she found an asexual t-shirt and threw it on. For pants, Rachel settled for pajamas. She didn't want to wear corny Christmas themed ones, so she decided on a simple black set that said, 'Aeropostale' down the side.

She dried her hair, and then watching herself in the mirror, started trying to detangle it with the first brush she saw on her vanity. The sight of many makeup products scared her. She hoped she wouldn't stay stuck as a girl long enough to have to wear any.

Back on the computer, Rachel looked at the Wi-Fi and was happy to see a

connection there. She remembered the family still had dial-up around 2004 before Ryan talked them into going DSL. Jumping on a web browser, she started to look up terms such as ‘turned into a girl’ and ‘gender change back in time.’ After thirty minutes of looking, Rachel only found a few fiction sites and some weird Yahoo! and Lycos groups.

Giving up the search for a bit, Rachel went back down stairs to grab a drink. Pamela saw Rachel and said, “Honey, why don’t you come down here with your laptop and open some more presents.”

“That’s okay Mom, I can wait until later,” she responded.

“It’s Christmas...” Pamela insisted.

The pressure got the best of Rachel, and she gave in, going upstairs to grab the laptop and cell phone. She spent next few hours watching others open presents and opening some herself. Rachel tried to look happy getting new makeup, dresses, stuff with ‘Juicy’ written on it, a few Sims games for the laptop, UGGs, and several DVDs of a bunch of girly shows from the early-mid aughts.

She challenged Madison to a few video games, including some Madison got for the GameCube. This helped to pass the time and take her mind off things for a while. In the early evening, Pamela had begun prepping dinner. At 7 p.m. the doorbell rang while Rachel was on her laptop. She could hear her dad talking to someone at the front door.

“Hey, Matt. Merry Christmas.”

‘Who in the fuck is Matt?’ she wondered.

Entering the living room, Rachel saw a boy about 16-years-old walk in. He was wearing a black sweater and holding a wrapped gift. His light brown hair covered his forehead, and he smiled widely at the sight of Rachel.

“Merry Christmas, Babe. Happy Holidays!” said Matt.

Rachel became extremely nervous and thought she was stupid for not checking into more about her life as Rachel, rather than how to escape. This was obviously Rachel's boyfriend. She knew exactly who he was. Matt Kingston, semi-popular guy around Rivertowne High who was tall and athletic. Of course, he would be dating some cheerleader. As Ryan, he didn't know Matt personally, but knew of him. Unsure of what to do, Rachel considered her alternatives.

"Matt, I was in the hospital earlier today and felt like sh... crap all day," she said.

"Yeah, your mom told my mom earlier today," replied Matt. "I'm glad you are feeling better now!"

"Actually I'm not.... Yeah, you should probably go back home and not get infected by me," said Rachel.

Matt inched closer to her for a kiss, "Don't be silly...."

Rachel took his hand off her chest, surprised that he was making this move right in front of her dad. Guess he had done this before. "No really...I don't feel good," she whined.

Randy butted in, "Now Rachel.... It's Christmas. You just need some of your mother's wonderful cooking to feel better."

She shook her head, wondering why no one was taking any hints, but she didn't see any way out other than to tell Matt off. Instead, a few minutes later, Rachel found herself at the dining room table with her family and Matt.

The entire situation was very uncomfortable. Matt was talking about all of these things happening in his life, as well as plans for him and Rachel in the near future. He seemed especially excited about going ice skating. Rachel faked her way through the conversation, which her parents took as a sign that maybe she wasn't going crazy after all.

Rachel was barely paying attention. She spent most of the dinner

brainstorming alternative scenarios, trying to remember anything that could have caused this transformation. She realized that she was the only one with memories of her being male, which was startling.

After dinner, Rachel found herself on the sofa in the living room with Matt, while Madison went upstairs, and her parents were in the kitchen cleaning.

“Are you ready to exchange gifts?” Matt asked.

Rachel stared at him, “That reminds me... I even forgot to give my parents and Madison their gift!” It occurred to Rachel; they were probably under the tree somewhere.

“Do you want to go first...?” he asked.

“Sure....” she said making her way to the huge bright Christmas tree. Looking under the tree, she saw two gifts labeled ‘To: Matt <3 From: Rachel XOXO’. Disgusted, she picked them up and basically threw them at him. “Here....”

Matt smiled at his feisty girlfriend and started opening the first present.

“Oh wow! Thanks!” he said, looking at the cologne set. For the second gift which was long, Matt ripped it open and pronounced: “Cool! Guitar Hero!”

“I can totally kick your ass in that game by the way,” Rachel said half-joking, but half-not.

“We’ll see about that,” said Matt smiling as he gave Rachel a gift.

“Let’s see what this could be....” Rachel said, shaking it to try to hear a clue. She was trying to keep herself entertained while hanging out with this teenage boy.

“Go ahead and open it!” Matt declared.

Rachel started opening the gift. “Oh, just what I wanted...a giant box of body

sprays.”

“I knew you would love it!” said Matt, not catching on to Rachel’s sarcasm. “Always love when you are smelling fresh.... Umm.... Why don’t you put some on now?” asked Matt as he inched closer to her, putting his arm behind her neck.

“Thanks Matt,” she said as she pulled away.

Matt looked around the room, “Rachel...is something wrong? Are you really feeling that horrible tonight? You haven’t been acting like yourself at all.”

Rachel replied, “No, nothing is right. And sorry but I don’t want you all over me trying to kiss me and shit.”

Matt took defensive, “Ouch.... Just yesterday you were telling me about how much you were looking forward to me coming over tonight. What gives?”

Looking into his eyes, Rachel said, “There’s something we need to talk about.”

“You broke up with him on Christmas?!” Kirsten screamed inside of Rachel’s bedroom.

Rachel was very happy to make Matt cry and leave immediately after she told them it was over. He took his gifts and went straight to his car after realizing he wasn’t going to win the argument. Rachel felt pretty happy knowing she wasn’t going to have a guy make an advance on her again.

Thirty minutes later, Kirsten arrived at the house; she was dropped off by her mom. Kirsten commented that Rachel looked like she was bumming it all day, and that she didn’t seem like herself either. Rachel, on the other hand, was still in a state of shock to be hanging out with a hot girl from high school that she knew very little about.

Kirsten seemed very outgoing and was asking a ton of questions. Rachel knew it was best to get her in private upstairs to talk before exchanging gifts

or other things that Kirsten expected for the night.

“Of course I did,” said Rachel.

“Rachel, what in the hell is going on? First, you faint this morning, your mom said you were acting weird and saying strange things, although she didn’t tell me details. Then you break up with Matt even though you were in love with him? Tell me what those medical tests really said and what is going on?” asked Kirsten.

Rachel was unsure of what love meant to a 15-year-old girl, but took Kirsten’s word for it. She gazed at Kirsten, whose pretty blonde hair was cascading over her cashmere sweater as she laid on the bed, fiddling with Rachel’s Powerbook, browsing MyPlace.

Rachel said, “Kirsten...I want you to listen to me very carefully, and this is very serious. I’ve been playing it off for the last few hours just to make Christmas more comfortable for the family, but I’m scared. I’m really Ryan Sutton and am 25 years old. All of these events have already happened. Just yesterday it was 2015, and I was visiting home from California.”

Kirsten grinned and started to interrupt, but Rachel continued in an excited tone, “Something happened during the night, and I woke up as a girl. That’s why I collapsed. I tried telling my mom and the doctor about this, but no one will believe me. Those tests showed that I appear to be a healthy 15-year-old girl, but all of my memories are of being a 25-year-old male. It’s like the entire universe changed to turn me into a girl, and now I’m stuck like this, and put back in time.”

Staring at Rachel blankly, Kirsten replied, “You know that is the most ridiculous joke I have ever heard in my life right?” before bursting into laughter.

Rachel paced around the room, “I figured you would say that. Of course, it is not logical at all for someone to go back in time, let alone change gender, and I’ve been trying to find a way to prove it to people.”

Kirsten continued, “And you told the doctor this?”

“Yes! What else am I going to tell them?” said Rachel.

“Wow....” stated Kirsten, still laughing.

Rachel continued, “They want to bring me back for a checkup in a few days.”

Kirsten asked, “And you are going to tell them the same story?”

Rachel replied, “YES! What else am I supposed to do? I have to change back. I don’t want to be stuck as a girl back in time. This sucks dick.”

“You better be careful about taking this joke too far....Might get sent to a mental hospital,” said Kirsten as her smile faded.

“Kirsten... this is seriously NOT a joke.... I have to find a way to prove to you that I am NOT Rachel and there has been a big mistake. Unfortunately, I don’t know hardly anything about you and don’t know of any big events that happen in the next day or so from back then,” explained Rachel.

Looking at her friend, Kirsten got upset, “Okay, now that did hurt . Why would you say you don’t know me when we have been best friends since I moved here?”

“I’m dead serious about this Kirsten!” Rachel cried, getting teary-eyed again with the influx of hormones in her body. “If this was a joke...why would I go as far as to break up with Matt on Christmas, stress out my family, and almost be declared insane?”

Kirsten took her comments seriously for the first time. Nothing about today had made any sense. Usually Rachel texted her a lot more and Rachel didn’t even reply to any photos of her gifts that Kirsten sent. She had been excited about having her boyfriend over for Christmas dinner for the first time, but now wanted nothing to do with him. Being athletic, Rachel was healthy, worked out with Kirsten, and had a similar diet with no history of medical defects or fatigue. As unbelievable as it sounded, Kirsten was starting to

believe her friend. She asked, “You are serious about this...aren’t you?”

“That’s what I’ve been trying to tell you this entire time!” said Rachel.

“And you are sure you are not going insane?” asked Kirsten.

“Kirsten...I honestly have NO memory of being Rachel. The only thing I’m trying to do is get back to 2015 and being male. I’m not trying to ruin lives in whatever universe this is right now. You have to help me! My parents are not going to believe me, and I spent a lot of time today looking for clues online to no avail,” Rachel begged.

“What do you want me to do?” asked Kirsten as she swung her hair back. “I don’t have a magic wand.”

Rachel burst into tears, “No one is going to believe me! GOD! Something had to change me and something has to change me back!”

At that moment, Kirsten honestly wasn’t sure if her friend was insane or serious about the matter. Unsure of how to proceed, she just hugged her crying friend. After several seconds, Kirsten asked, “Just so we don’t think you are cray cray, do you have any way to prove that you were a man?”

Rachel sniffed, “I mean...I can prove that I was living in 2015 easily. Next year, Saddam Hussein is executed, MCR comes out with The Black Parade, Steve Irwin dies, and that Mexican restaurant on Main Street catches on fire.” She tried her hardest to think of historical events from back then and continued, “I just don’t want to have to wait months to prove all of this is correct!”

Kirsten paused, “Is there anything else.... Like something that can be proven quickly.”

She thought for a moment while still crying, “Alex....”

“Who is Alex?”

“Alex Hummel, you know him from school right?” asked Rachel.

“Never heard of him....” said Kirsten, being honest. Although it was a medium-sized school, it appeared that Kirsten was in a completely different group. Ryan and Alex had never directly interacted with her.

Rachel continued, “He was my best friend back in high school. I just saw him for the first time in years the other night. We need to get ahold of him. My parents definitely aren’t going to believe me, Madison is too young right now, and Alex was the next closest person to me.”

“Do you have his number?” asked Kirsten.

“I can’t remember what it was right off hand,” Rachel said picking up her clunky cellphone and clicking the Contacts option. Pressing the down arrow button, Rachel saw that there was an Abbie and Amanda in the phone, but no Alex in-between. “Looks like he isn’t part of this life,” said Rachel.

“Then what is his name on MyPlace?” asked Kirsten.

Rachel had not thought of the site in years, and didn’t know why she didn’t think to check it earlier in the day. She probably had a profile of her own. She jogged her memory and then told Kirsten, “Seeing Loneliness.”

“Okay, found him!” said Kirsten noticing that Alex had long hair, and his profile pic showed him playing bass guitar at some venue that looked dark. “Now what?”

“Message him and tell him I need to see him right now!” demanded Rachel.

“Umm.... Rachel. Your parents are going to freak out if you have a boy over here this late,” said Kirsten.

“I don’t care! What are they going to do? Punish me?”

“Probably,” replied Kirsten.

“Hmmm.... We can always meet up with him elsewhere,” said Rachel.

Kirsten replied, “It’s just too late, and my mom is going to pick me up in like 45 minutes. Is there any way we can do this tomorrow?”

Rachel said, “My parents mentioned that they are going to PA tomorrow to visit my dad’s brother and taking Madison. Back then, as Ryan, I stayed behind. So maybe I can talk them into letting me stay here by myself tomorrow afternoon and we can do it then.”

“Sounds like a plan!” Kirsten announced.

“Great! In the meantime, send Alex a message telling him I have to see him tomorrow, and give him my address since he probably doesn’t know it now,” said Rachel.

“Rachel, that’s not a good idea....”

“Why is that?” she asked.

“Maybe you really are forgetting that you are a girl! You can’t just tell him you want to see him. He’s going to get the wrong idea,” said Kirsten.

“Oh god, is this girl code stuff?” she asked.

“Just let me do the messaging. What time is good for you tomorrow?” asked Kirsten.

“Let’s aim for 11 a.m. The sooner, the better!”

“I still think this ordeal is completely ridiculous...but I’ll give it a chance,” said Kirsten.

“Thanks a lot, Kirsten! I’m glad you are understanding!”

“Yeah Yeah.... *Now* are you ready to exchange gifts?!” asked Kirsten.
“You remember where you put my present, right?”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Friends Are Where You Need Them

The next day, Alex was very anxious about going to the house of a hot cheerleader and seeing her equally sexy friend. It was a wet dream come true. Unfortunately for him, Rachel continued to dress down, and Kirsten was wearing sweats as well.

Rachel felt she only had a few hours to convince him that she was really a guy, or she was going to be screwed. In the first few minutes, Alex was very confused, but Rachel laid out everything for him. The story was consistent with the one she told Kirsten. Still in disbelief, Kirsten continued the conversation.

“You are serious about this, aren’t you?” asked Kirsten.

Rachel sat on the sofa with her legs wide open wearing gray sweatpants and a large hoodie. Her hair was a mess, unbrushed, and hanging down her shoulders. Looking up with her hands still under her chin, she said, “YES! Why would I make this up?!”

“As a prank?” said Alex, still in disbelief that he was invited to Rachel’s house in the first place.

Continuing to wipe tears from her eyes, Rachel spoke, “No...this is not something I would ever joke about. I’m really scared!”

Kirsten sat on the sofa next to her friend and gave her a side hug. “Rachel, we invited him over here so you can prove this once and for all.”

“Yes, I know....” said Rachel. She turned her attention to Alex, “Alex, you claim that I have never talked to you at school other than casually passing by or in a few classes right?”

“Yup,” he responded, still nervous to be in her presence.

“Then I should know nothing about you personally right?”

“As far as I know, unless you are stalking,” he said still wondering if this hot girl was a nut job, and realizing that he didn’t care if she’d put out.

Rachel said, “Okay, well I know your address is 351 Maple and that your favorite food is General Tso’s chicken, but maybe I need to get more personal. Things you would have only told me when I was Ryan.”

Alex started to get a little nervous.

Rachel continued her discussion, “Would just anyone know that you broke your forearm during a soccer match in seventh grade?”

Alex responded, “Come on Rachel.... You were in one of my seventh grade classes and saw me with a cast on! I think you even signed it....”

She caught herself and continued, “Fine...then how about how your dad cheated on your mom last year with that secretary named Sarine?”

“WHAT?!” said Alex, slightly pissed that Rachel found out a personal detail he’d only told to two or three guy friends since his parents were separated. “Who told you that?”

“You did....” said Rachel.

“NO! Somebody told you....” said Alex. “Who else is in on this joke?”

Rachel became more emotional, but angrier that Alex was acting like a typical stupid teenage boy again. She thought long and hard about the most personal details she knew about him, and then remembered one of the most fucked up things he had ever said to her—or rather to Ryan. She didn’t want to say it in front of Kirsten, but then again she only had him over to prove her sanity verify her situation.

“Fine Alex.... You leave me no choice. Do not try to get out of this one. You need to admit it, as my life depends on it. When I was Ryan, you told me a

very personal detail when we were talking about sex stuff once, and told me to never tell anyone. Well, I kept that promise, but it needs to be said now. I'm only gonna reveal this so you two will finally believe me when I say that I'm a man and I'm stuck back in time. Over last summer, you were at a family event, and your older cousin Samantha was wearing a tight black bikini. Later that night, you masturbated to the thought of her wearing it and bouncing around," said Rachel as casually as possible.

Alex's face turned bright red, and he was at a loss for words.

"Oh my gawd is that true?!" asked Kirsten looking at Alex with more than a hint of disgust.

"Admit it!" demanded Rachel.

Still having trouble getting the words out, and feeling his dick shrivel in embarrassment while an early song of Macklemore's played from an iTunes playlist, Alex said, "How could you know that...?"

"You told me...." Rachel said.

"No.... No.... I have never told anyone about that," Alex said defensively.

Rachel said, "That's exactly it.... You told me in Spring of 2006. In the future.... When you told me, err tell me that, you said I was the first person you ever admitted that too, and that's why I had to keep it a secret. As far as I know, you never told anyone else."

"How could it.... How in the world are you from the future?" Alex said, finally believing her slightly.

Rachel said, "That's exactly what we need to figure out! The entire universe has changed. Obviously, it appears as if I was always Rachel, but that is not the case. Things are the same in some ways, but different in others now that I'm a girl. I have to change back."

Kirsten started to believe her after calling Alex out on his masturbation habits

and said, “It just doesn’t make sense. How in the hell does a person change gender out of nowhere!”

Rachel sniffed, “Not just that. AND travel back in time!”

“It’s crazy!” said Alex, still dumbfounded about the incredible situation.

“I just need help, and you two seem to be the only two who believe me,” replied Rachel.

Kirsten asked, “Do your parents still think it’s a joke?”

Looking down at the ground, Rachel replied, “Yes. Even after everything I’ve told them, they think I’m crazy, and I may even have to start seeing a shrink soon.”

Alex thought for a moment, “Do you think that would help?”

“NO!” screamed Rachel. “A psychiatrist isn’t going to magically turn me back into a man!”

“Then what will?” asked Alex.

“That’s what I need your help with! I don’t know!” screamed Rachel, still trying to hold back tears.

Alex shook his head, causing his emo-hair to swing to the side. “I mean if we did know, I’m sure you would have a dick by now.”

“Funny...” said Kirsten sarcastically. “Rachel...think back to what happened when you got back. Was anything out of the ordinary?” Thinking of some movies and fantasy books she had read, Kirsten started brainstorming. “Maybe you pissed off some witch...or umm...ran over a black cat or something?”

“Not at all,” replied Rachel. “There were no witches or genies, or any kind of enemies that I know of. I was looking forward to coming back here since it

had been years, but when I got back everything was terrible compared to how I remember it. Alex and I went out the night I came back, and I was ashamed of everything.... My parents divorce...the decline of the town.... Oh and Alex...make sure you stay off drugs no matter how bad things get, and please go to college!”

Alex felt something weird move in his stomach. Rachel was lecturing him just like his mom always did.

Kirsten looked at her friend confused. “And there wasn’t anything else?”

“No! After a few drinks I went to bed depressed and when I woke up I looked like this and was back in 2005!”

“That’s very weird....” replied Kirsten, unable to come up with an answer.

Alex continued pacing around the room. “This may sound a little weird Rachel...but when you were a man did you ever wish you were a girl?”

“ABSOLUTELY NOT!” said Rachel, the pitch of her voice rising in the process of her rebuttal. “I truly enjoyed being a male. Sure, everyone has thought about what it would be like to live as the opposite sex at some point, but it wasn’t a strong desire. Life was very good as a man. I had a girlfriend in California and everything. The only thing I wished for was for things to improve back here in Rivertown since it seems like everyone’s life here was terrible.”

There was a brief moment of silence before Kirsten spoke up. “Wait a minute.... You told me last night that you had no idea how bad it was until you came back, and that your family and friends back here never told you how terrible it had gotten.”

“That’s the truth! I didn’t realize it until Christmas Eve Eve when I got into town,” said Rachel.

Kirsten paused once again before stating, “That means you would have made the wish on Christmas Eve....”

“Yeah...and?” asked Rachel.

“Your Christmas wish came true....” said Kirsten.

Both Alex and Rachel looked at her confused.

Kirsten continued, “There’s a famous folklore story.... It states that magic is in the Christmas air and one major wish is granted to a select group of people every Christmas Eve. It has to do with constellation design for someone who was looking at the star at the same time they made the wish.”

“But I didn’t wish to become a girl!” replied Rachel.

Alex said, “You mean if I wished for a new car that night while looking at the sky, it would have come true?”

Rachel ignored Alex’s comment, thinking of it as a joke at an inappropriate time. “How do you know this stuff?”

Kirsten smiled, “What can I say? I have a nerdy side!”

“But that still doesn’t explain why I’m a girl and back in time!” said Rachel.

“What else is there then?” asked Kirsten. “So far, it is the only logical explanation?”

“So you believe in magic?” asked Alex.

“To an extent.... Rachel, you said you had never wished to be a girl prior. What exactly did you wish for?”

Rachel covered her face with her hands before pulling them back and saying, “Just that I wished things would go back to the way they were and for everyone to be much happier.”

“Hmm, the first part makes sense. You said things went downhill in town. So

‘going back’ would mean going back in time. It’s hard to say why you got a sex change in the process.”

Alex thought of making some jokes but refrained. The hamster wheel in his mind started spinning once again, and he blurted out, “Maybe you’ll be happier as a girl....”

“SHUT UP! Why did I invite you over again?” asked Rachel.

Kirsten thought for a moment, “He has a point....”

“What?” asked Rachel.

“Something about you being a female this time around.... It has to go along with this puzzle. Like maybe if you were born a girl in the first place, everyone would be in a better spot.... Maybe your parents will stay together.... Maybe Alex will have a career in the future....” explained Kirsten.

Rachel thought about it for a moment, and it started to make more sense. Although she didn’t want to admit it, Kirsten had made an accurate assumption...or at least for the moment.

“There’s just so much that has changed and I can seriously help everyone out right now. I need to tell my parents what to look out for in their marriage conflicts, and what to invest in so they can get super rich.”

Kirsten said, “But that is for the future that already happened in your world. Maybe the entire world is going to change now that you are a girl.”

“It can’t change that much other than my lifestyle! I never wanted to look like this. All of you are exactly the same from when I remember you from the past.”

“That’s not exactly true,” said Alex.

“What do you mean?” asked Rachel.

Alex explained, “When you first called me I was honestly shocked. You never once acknowledged me around school at all, and you always seemed to be involved with your clique. You keep saying all this stuff about what we did together when you were a boy, but none of it makes sense. Like you said our moms became good friends, but when I mentioned your mom’s name to mine, she said she had no idea who she was. It’s not just your life that is affected, it’s everyone’s.”

Kirsten nodded in agreement. “And I’m the opposite. I remember us hanging out, having sleep-overs and stuff ever since I moved here in middle school. The memories are endless since you’ve been my best friend for literally ever. Yet, I’ll be honest. It hurts that you have NO memory at all of any of it.” She paused for a moment to hold back light tears. “Plus, I know I’m going to lose you completely if you change back.”

Sitting back, Rachel considered the situation and realized that she had a profound impact on the lives of her friends. “I’m sorry...I really am. But look at it from my perspective.... I had always lived my life as Ryan Sutton. This life of being Rachel never existed in my mind, and I didn’t do it on purpose. If this theory is true, then everything has been rewritten although I am very confused about why I am the only one with memories of me being male. It’s nothing personal; it’s just that this isn’t my life. My life is being a 25-year-old college graduate who works in the entertainment industry, has a girlfriend, and is looking forward to things in his life. I’m not supposed to be stuck in high school. There is no reason for me to stay a girl for the rest of my life. That would be a nightmare!”

“It’s not that bad,” said Kirsten.

“You know what I mean Kirsten,” replied Rachel. “This isn’t my life. It’s like I have lost my entire identity.”

Alex spoke up, “Not that I believe in magic...but this is good evidence for it. How can we magically turn you back?”

Rachel spoke up, “We need to find something magical! Maybe a spell book

or something!”

Kirsten said, “I don’t think so. The story of that Christmas star wish thing doesn’t mention any of it being reversible.”

“What?!” said Rachel.

“As much as I hate to suggest this.... One option is for you go come out as transgender. You can start transitioning to look like a boy,” Kirsten offered.

“Jeez, that’s not going to work at all,” Rachel said, getting brushing off her friend’s suggestion. “That’s not the same, and my life would still be back here in the past. Plus my parents would probably freak out over that. Of course, in the meantime, I’m going to dress how I was and everything.”

Alex suggested, “Maybe just make another wish?”

Rachel smiled, “Okay!” Closing her eyes and said, “I WISH I WAS A MAN AGAIN AND BACK IN 2015!”

Hoping for another instant sex change, Rachel was left disappointed as nothing happened, and her friends stared at her like she was crazy.

“I don’t think it’s going to be that easy,” said Kirsten.

Alex said, “I mean it’s not going to be out of nowhere if it works. But think of when people usually make wishes. You know...birthdays and stuff. Kirsten, do you know of any stories with birthday candles and stuff?”

“I’ll look it up,” she replied.

Rachel protested, “But my birthday isn’t until May! That’s five months away!”

Kirsten patted her friend’s knee. “We can keep looking in the meantime, but if it took a wish for you to get into this situation, it make take another wish for you to get out.”

“Maybe let’s just go downstairs and try to find some candles?” Rachel suggested.

“Again, it probably won’t be that easy!” said Kirsten.

“So I’m stuck like this for months?!” asked Rachel. “What am I supposed to do?!”

“...Embrace it....” said Kirsten.

Rachel shouted, “What?!”

“Remember how you got here in the first place. You made a wish that you wanted for things to be back like they used to be, and for everyone to be happy again. You aren’t going to do anyone any favors by complaining and worrying them about your sanity,” Kirsten lectured.

“So you are suggesting I live like a girl?” asked Rachel.

“You ARE a girl,” replied Kirsten. “Everyone knows you as Rachel Sutton, and that is your identity here and now. It’s probably best that you live that life until you are able to change back.”

“I do not like that idea at all!” Rachel protested again.

“Rachel, you could be making things a lot worse by not doing that! I mean what if you get put in a mental hospital or cause people to become fatally depressed? Every little thing you do right now is going to affect the entire future for everyone,” said Kirsten.

Alex spoke up again, “It sounds like things are going to change in the future even if you ever do go back to being a man. Plus, is anyone in the future going to have memory of you living as a girl now?”

Rachel thought for a moment, “That’s exactly why I just want to live neutral and just try to improve things massively when I do change back. I need to tell

Dad about that terrible economic collapse coming up that will cause him to lose his job. I need to tell my parents to start thinking about making an app for cell phones that allows someone to book a room at someone's house, and one to get a ride in someone's car immediately so we can get rich and they can stay together!"

Both Alex and Kirsten looked at Rachel like she was out of her mind again.

"That's funny. It's hard enough to even check e-mail on these," said Alex, shaking his flip phone.

Kirsten thought of another approach, "Rachel, you need to be very careful about that stuff. I would love to know some things, but please don't tell me. ...Like, if I get into Yale or not?"

Rachel replied, "College is the easy part. It's getting a job afterward that is going to be hard, but to be honest, I don't know what happened to you after high school."

Kirsten was hurt by the confirmation that their friendship only existed because of this strange transformation, but she still continued, "Do you remember when we went to see The Butterfly Effect with our moms last year?"

"No...." Rachel quickly replied.

Kirsten stated, "Okay, well we did. Especially because you think Aston Kutcher is hot.... But in the movie he goes through different scenarios of what could have happened showing how little changes can cause massive differences."

Alex said, "It's also like in Back to the Future where he makes all those sports bets and ends up fucking things up even more...."

"I mean, I've seen both movies...." said Rachel.

"Then that means you can't do *anything* out of the ordinary. You already

could have changed too much just by causing that episode with your parents, breaking up with Matt, and contacting Alex who you had not even talked to. That's in only 24 hours of you living as a girl! You are going to have to adapt until you are able to change back."

"How do you suggest I do that?" asked Rachel.

Kirsten grinned, "We have about one week until we have to go back to school. It's only going to get worse if you keep changing things and don't go to school. I'm going to have to teach you everything about being a girl."

"Oh god!" screamed Rachel. "So you are going to show me how to put on a bra and shit like that?"

Kirsten smiled, "That's what best friends are for..."

CHAPTER EIGHT

Girl Training Begins

About fifteen minutes after the plan was hatched to have Rachel live her life as a girl until she could switch back, Alex left feeling slightly used and humiliated. The three of them also agreed to keep the plan completely discreet and not tell anyone about Rachel's ordeal. Kirsten had to threaten to go public with his fetish if Alex did not go along. The more Rachel thought about it, the more she wondered how the timeline would change had she develop a friendship with Alex as Rachel starting now. Kirsten recommended against it as they had no prior interaction before coming out with the story.

Rachel kept thinking about the situation and the Butterfly Effect that her friends discussed. Being more educated and experienced than Kirsten, she said, "I just thought of something. Since I am back in time, living an entirely different life, and apparently was never a man, isn't the future partially unwritten? I should be able to live my life as I want to now, correct?"

Kirsten debated the situation, "I don't think so. There are too many issues involved with this. Look at the panic you set into your family already by freaking them out. You said things are bad in the future, but what if your actions will cause things to get even worse?"

Rachel considered this for a moment, and realized that Kirsten wasn't as dumb as she originally thought. "I don't think that is possible. Also, when I switch back, I'm sure some things will change again."

"I think it's too risky to try to do anything too different. Until you can change back, you need to live as Rachel. I'm not happy about this either, considering I just lost my best friend!" Kirsten said, holding back tears.

"How are we supposed to do all of this then? Back to school, really? You know I'm going to pass all of the classes with straight A's now that I have college experience," she said.

Kirsten said, "Um Rachel... You are already a straight A student?"

“What?” Rachel asked surprised.

“You have a 4.0 GPA and are always on top of your school work.”

Rachel said, “How in the hell is that possible? Before, I graduated with like a 2.5 GPA or something like that.”

“That’s the thing, Rachel.... That’s not you anymore. Whatever happened in that past life of yours is not happening now. As hard as this is going to be, if this is going to work, you have to stop trying to act like Ryan and start thinking of yourself as Rachel.”

“You do understand how ridiculous it is for a grown man to act like a teenage girl right?” Rachel asked Kirsten.

Kirsten laughed a little at the comment, “Then I guess you are going to have to try very hard! Just think, it’s dangerous to fight this, and you don’t want anyone to overhear you. Does Madison even know about this?”

“No, I played some video games with her, but at her age, she wouldn’t understand. Mom and Dad definitely didn’t mention anything that happened at the hospital,” said Rachel.

“Good, keep it that way!” Kirsten demanded.

“How are we supposed to start all this then? I guess you are going to give me a makeover, force me to wear those sissy dresses, and walk in heels?” asked Rachel.

“Even though you are a girly-girl, that’s not the most important part,” said Kirsten. “It’s all about your identity. How you act, who you know, what your lifestyle is, all of that good stuff. You need to learn all about your life as Rachel and play the part exactly.”

“That’s going to be extremely hard.... In only a week?” asked Rachel.

“Give or take. You are lucky to have a friend like me! We need to get started NOW!”

Hours later, Kirsten was looking through the second set of index cards.

“Terri, Dee, Chelsea, you, and.... Felicia?” Rachel answered.

“Great!” Kirsten said after Rachel successfully named all of the girls that sat at their lunch table. “Now.... Dee’s crush is who?”

“Skylar,” said Rachel already bored with the conversation.

Kirsten gave her the next question, “What does Chelsea want to major in at college?”

“Nursing.”

“How did you first meet Terri?”

“When she joined the cheerleading squad at the beginning of school,” Rachel answered correctly.

“Felicia always makes fun of your...?”

Rachel answered, “Taste in music?”

“Nope! Corny jokes!”

“Ah...no big deal on that one right?” asked Rachel.

“You need to memorize EVERYTHING!” said Kirsten.

“I know...give me a break. I think I’ve been doing pretty well on this so far. It’s just about memorizing useless trivia about people,” said Rachel.

“It’s not useless! You can’t find yourself stuck in conversation, and you need to smile and laugh more to be one of the girls,” replied Kirsten.

The thought of being one of the girls still scared Rachel. She was planning to spend just as much time looking for a way to reverse the transformation as she had to spend in Girl Training 101.

“I think I need a break,” said Rachel.

“That sounds good,” replied Kirsten. “Want me to see if my Mom can take us somewhere?”

“Are you insane? I’m not going out in public like this!”

“Rachel...you are going to have to...remember? You’ve been cooped up in here for two days, minus the hospital visit.”

“I’m just not ready for it,” she complained.

“I can tell,” replied Kirsten hinting at the fact that Rachel looked like a bum. “Have you even showered lately?”

“Yes.”

“What did you use?”

“Some of my dad’s stuff,” Rachel replied.

Kirsten got a disgusted look on her face, “So that explains why you smell like a guy.... Come on.... We need to change this....”

“Wait, you want me to strip naked in front of you?” asked Rachel, nervous to be seen nude by a teenage girl.

“No!” Kirsten said, nervous even herself that her best friend was really a 25-year-old man stuck in a 15-year-old girl’s body. “I’ve seen you naked plenty of times and vice versa, but I’m going to show you the basics and then go in

the bedroom. By the way, your legs have some stubble on them. You need to shave them!”

In the bathroom, Kirsten gave Rachel lectures on everything from the proper way to shave her armpits and legs, to what type of moisturizer to use on her face and what scents she likes, depending on the time of day and season. Rachel did not find it too hard to follow the explanation, but it was more difficult for her to grasp the idea that she was now going to have to pay perfect attention to her appearance. She nicked herself a few times while shaving, and was still stunned at looking down there and not seeing her dick anymore. While shaving her legs, she became curious about touching her vagina, although mentally blocked herself every time she had that thought. She did get a chance to touch her breasts again, this time with some peppermint-scented soap..

While Rachel was in the shower, Kirsten thought of other ways she could help Rachel jog her memory. They had gone over all of their close friends, and what classes she would have at school. The Rachel she knew kept a diary, but hid it somewhere in the room because Madison was so nosey. She didn't feel comfortable going through all of Rachel's things, as that would be an invasion of privacy, but she made a mental note to bring it up with Rachel. This was not going to be an easy task, and would be very time-consuming. They were facing real time pressure, especially since school was going to start again right after New Years Day.

Kirsten went back on MyPlace to look at a few things while Rachel struggled with her hair again. In the bathroom, Rachel threw several towels around herself and cleared the mirror. She couldn't deny it: she was an extremely attractive girl. Finding herself sexy was as hard as facing the fact that she was stuck back in time.

She wondered why she looked drastically different as a female. Some of her facial features did resemble her mom and Madison, but the biggest differences were in her nose and facial shape. She brushed her teeth, probably the most unisex thing she could possibly do while in there.

Earlier, she tried to pee standing up, but found out the hard way that that does

not work out too well without male equipment. She had to learn to sit and wipe herself clean. Part of her wanted to delay learning how to live like a teenage girl, but knew she had no choice.

Kirsten was a good friend after all, and very smart for her age. This came as a surprise since as Ryan, he only thought of her as a ditzy cheerleader. Then again, he didn't know her very well at the time and just made assumptions. Wrong assumptions as it turned out.

"I guess that's something else I should have taught you..." said Kirsten at the sight of Rachel walking back into the room with multiple towels on her body.

"What?" asked Rachel.

"You look ridiculous with all of those towels on you. You just need to wrap one around your body and then one on your head if you wash your hair."

"What do you mean if I wash it?" asked Rachel.

"Washing every day can be unhealthy!" said Kirsten as she got up. "Now strip!"

Rachel took a moment, then let all of the towels fall to the ground, exposing her naked body to Kirsten. It was bad enough having a girl's body, but now being naked in front of another girl her apparent age made her feel even more embarrassed. Kirsten quickly picked up a towel and wrapped it around Rachel's body.

"Just tuck it in here. See? Easy!" said Kirsten. "Then again, with your hair."

Rachel soon found wrapping her hair in a towel was a good way to dry it. Still, she whined, "Why can't I just do it the same way I did as a guy?"

"One, you probably have longer hair now, and two, this way you can brush it easy," said Kirsten. "Now...we need to find you some clothes."

"Why can't I just put the ones the I had on earlier back on?"

“Ew, that is digesting!” Kirsten stated. “That is something a guy would say. ... Have you even worn any of your other clothes?”

“No.”

Kirsten shook her head and went to Rachel’s top drawer where she grabbed some items for her friend to wear. “Here, put these on...” she said throwing Rachel some pink lace boy short panties.

“No!” said Rachel.

“Come on...you are going to have to wear girl’s underwear!” said Kirsten.

“Yeah, I can go buy some other kind later...I’ll wear girl clothes over top but not panties!”

Kirsten shrugged... “You don’t get it do you...?”

“What?” asked Rachel.

“Please don’t tell me I just wasted my entire day if you aren’t going to take this seriously.”

Rachel protested, “Kirsten...this is all really difficult for me to grasp. I appreciate that you have been willing to help me and have spent the time, but you can’t expect me to dive right in to feminization.”

Kirsten thought for a moment, “Sorry, but you are a girl now and are going to be stuck as one until further notice. There are certain clothes that you are going to wear that require panties and thongs. You can’t just go from girly to tomboy over the course of a few days. We’ve talked about this, so why all this complaining again now?”

Rachel replied, “It’s a little much....”

“It’s about to get worse,” said Kirsten.

“Why?”

“You need to put on a bra.”

Rachel wiggled her body a bit and adjusted the bra on her body. It wasn't super tight but wasn't loose either. It didn't help that her breasts were kind of big and the demi-cup bra helped show them off. Rachel couldn't decide which was worse, feeling feminized by wearing a bra, or the weird feeling of having lacy fabric fitting snugly where he used to have a dick. By this time, her hair had dried a little, and Kirsten had shown her the proper way to brush it.

Kirsten looked in Rachel's closet for something casual, throwing her a white Aeropostale shirt and tight jeans. Rachel dressed in them, knowing she wouldn't look out of the ordinary when her family came back home.

Looking in the mirror again, the image of the Rachel everyone else knew was coming together, although still minus her usual jewelry and makeup. Kirsten offered to help her learn makeup, but Rachel managed to talk her into doing it another day in an effort to work out logistics.

“And your locker combination is 34-5-7 in the hallway and then 12-13-30 in the gym.”

“How do you know this?” asked Rachel as she wrote down the information.

“Because you have mine as well!” Kirsten said, “24-1-15 hallway and gym is 8-0-25.”

“Got it,” said Rachel as she scribbled on the forty-fifth page of notes, her handwriting slightly feminized due to her smaller hands.

“Also, earlier I thought of something that would be really helpful. You keep a diary, but I have never seen it. You mentioned it to me a few times, the last

time was when you found Madison with it a few weeks ago and hid it in a place where only you could find it,” said Kirsten.

Rachel thought about if she had kept a journal when she was a guy and, other than some blog posts, it didn’t exist. Back then, there wasn’t a reason to hide anything and she didn’t have the first clue where to look.

“I’m assuming you think there’s a bunch of personal details in there that I should know, and maybe I am the only person that knows them?” asked Rachel.

“Exactly. It would help so much, especially with getting your personality back,” said Kirsten.

“How detailed do you think it is?” Rachel asked.

“Let’s just say Madison knows Matt’s kissing skills and what parts of his body you have touched.”

“WHAT?!?!” said Rachel. One incident with having a teen boy touch her was enough, and she didn’t want to even fathom other intimate situations.

Kirsten giggled a little, “Don’t worry. It’s nothing too bad.”

Rachel became curious, “I am still a virgin...right?”

“YES!” Kirsten said, “Of course we’ve talked about it, and we both want to do it with a boy eventually, but we need to wait a bit. Although I can tell you that Matt has been bugging the hell out of you for it.”

“You mean you are a virgin too?” Rachel asked.

“Yes!” Kirsten replied.

Rachel had not had a conversation like this in years, and she also understood that they were only 15. She assumed in the past that it was different for girls, even though she didn’t lose her virginity as Ryan until the age of 17.

“At least it won’t be a problem anymore now that he went bye-bye,” said Rachel.

“That’s another thing...” said Kirsten.

“Wait, you are saying I shouldn’t have dumped him?” Rachel screamed.

Kirsten said, “It wasn’t supposed to happen. You weren’t going to break up with him on Christmas. Hopefully, he will take you back, since it was only yesterday, but you probably hurt his feelings a lot. You are going to need to stay in a relationship with him until things were supposed to end.”

“And how am I supposed to know when that is?” asked Rachel, obviously unhappy that she had to be someone’s girlfriend.

“I don’t know!” said Kirsten. “I haven’t been to the future yet! What was Alex doing in your timeline.”

“I honestly don’t know,” said Rachel.

“Okay, well this is how things are now, and you are happy, so just roll with it. Call him tonight!”

“Ugh.... What else for today?”

Kirsten said, “You should probably do something or say something that will make your family more at ease, especially with the appointments coming up.”

“And when am I going to see you again?” asked Rachel.

“How about tomorrow at my house 3 p.m?” said Kirsten. “We can do another Rachel test; I’ll show you some makeup stuff, and some things to make you sound and act more natural.”

“What do you mean?”

“The knowledge and look is only half the battle. Your mannerisms need to change back to normal, and the way you talk, it still sounds like you are old.”

“25 isn’t old!”

“Yeah it is!” said Kirsten.

“No, it’s really not!”

“YES IT IS!” said Kirsten trying to win the argument.

Not wanting to battle her anymore, Rachel gave in, “Fine...but as soon as you leave here and I am alone tonight, I am going to try hard to find another way to switch back.”

“That’s up to you, and completely understandable,” said Kirsten, although she looked hurt by the thought of losing Rachel. “We know you want to change back, but in the meantime; it’s girl time.”

“Great...” said Rachel.

“Although I was thinking...if you change back, I wonder how much of this past will change,” asked Kirsten.

“I’m hoping that when I change back, everything is the same and all this was just some kind of parallel universe.”

Kirsten started to think about her fate, “I know you said you didn’t know me that well, but...did I seem happy?”

“Yes Kirsten, you have the same look, and you appeared to be one of the most popular girls at school. Your friend circle is mostly the same as it was, mostly cheerleaders and a few other popular girls that I really didn’t talk to at all. But also, you were always one of the prettiest.”

Kirsten blushed a little, always loving a compliment. “Just remember, I’m here to help! Although I do need to get home soon.”

“Alright, well thanks for everything today,” said Rachel, half-serious and the other half wishing all this never happened.

“Again, that’s what I’m here for. Just remember to keep your panties on after I leave, and work on this whole thing. Study, study, study!” said Kirsten.

CHAPTER NINE

Evaluation

Rachel sat with her nylon-clad legs crossed, with her hands neatly together on her knees holding down the skirt of her black and purple skater dress. Her hair had been neatly curled partially thanks to some beauty lessons from Kirsten. She had been trying her best to display feminine grace over the past few days.

Although she'd made a few mistakes at first, painting her finger and toe nails purple proved to not be such a difficult task after all. This December 29th meeting with the psychologist Dr. Heilburg would have to go without any glitches in order to avoid major complications.

Over the past few days, Rachel had continued to study vigorously in order to make herself seem like a girl to everyone else, rather than someone who should be committed to a mental hospital.

Dr. Heilburg continued his questioning, "Thanks for sharing that information with me Rachel. It sounds by all accounts that you are happy with your circle of friends."

"Oh I am!" smiled Rachel. "I have the best group ever."

He smiled back, and made a few more notes on his pad. When she was Ryan, Rachel had had some tough job interviews, but this was definitely the most difficult by far. All of her answers were lies told to manipulate the therapist and deal with unbelievable circumstances.

Dr. Heilburg continued, "And the statements you made in the hospital, about the future and your life as a male. When did those thoughts first occur?"

"Oh that?!" said Rachel throwing her hand forward and then down, "It was just a bad dream I had and it carried over."

"Your parents said you also broke up with your boyfriend that night," Dr.

Heilburg stated. "Is that true?"

Rachel leaned her head back, causing her earrings to dangle. "Yeah, but we are back together now. It was just a really weird day."

"Your parents also stated that you admitted to drinking alcohol the night prior."

Rachel regurgitated the information she had practiced for any situation and excuse that may come up. "Yeah, it wasn't much though. I just took some wine that my mom had downstairs."

Dr. Heilburg snarled, "Rachel, this is very serious! A girl your age should not drink any alcohol. At your weight, it does not take much to have effects on your mind and body. That is probably what caused the unusual dreams and statements to occur."

"Yeah, I kinda figured that," Rachel admitted.

"Have you consumed any alcohol since then?" asked Dr. Heilburg.

"No sir. It was a one time thing just to celebrate Christmas."

Dr. Heilburg said, "It is somewhat unusual for people your age to consume alcohol for the first time by themselves. Typically it is a peer related incident. Have you ever had alcohol with friends?"

"No Dr. Heilburg. My parents don't drink much and just had it for the holidays so I figured I would try it."

"Do you plan to indulge again?" asked Dr. Heilburg.

"Not anytime soon! I can't wait till I'm 21!"

Dr. Heilburg smiled, "And where do you see yourself at 21?"

Rachel continued her lies, "Hopefully in my last year of college. I'm still

unsure about a major, but I'll probably pick nursing or teaching 'cause I want to help people."

"Those are great professions," said Dr. Heilburg. "You seem to care deeply about people."

"Yes, totally!" said Rachel. "I just love my family and friends a lot and want to make a difference in the community as well."

Seeing Dr. Heilburg smile and nod, Rachel relaxed. Her plans had worked. She'd successfully manipulated him into believing she really was a teenage girl, or at least one without the mind of an older man. The doctor made some final notes and said, "Thank you Rachel, for chatting with me today. Do you have any questions for me?"

Rachel smiled, "Not that I can think of right now!"

Dr. Heilburg mirrored her smile, "Perfect. I would like to have a word with your parents privately, if you do not mind, please wait in the lobby."

"Sounds great! Thanks Dr. Heilburg."

Rachel left the room and her parents soon entered to have their own chat with the psychologist.

After their greetings, Pamela asked, "Is she okay Dr. Heilburg?"

Dr. Heilburg smiled, "Rachel seems to be a very compassionate and intelligent young lady. Based on the physical examination, she is healthy and, from our chat today, she is showing signs of normality."

Randy asked, "And what about all that crazy talk she had about the future and being a man?"

Dr. Heilburg said, "There is a condition called Abnormal Cognitive Psycholinguistic Personality Disorder which causes people to occasionally make up memories of a different identity. It is very rare."

Pamela looked concerned, “Rachel has that?”

“Luckily, no,” said Dr. Heilburg. “That condition is something that typically starts small and develops over time. There is no cure, however behavioral therapy can help ease the condition. No accounts are as detailed as what Rachel displayed that day. When those conditions occur, it is called Cognitive Reflex Anomalies. Imbalances in psychonerves cause the person to display dreamlike statements over the course of a few hours. The cause is usually a vivid nightmare or, in the case of Rachel, a combination of a bad dream and alcohol consumption.”

“Oh god,” Pamela said, thinking about the wine she had. “I didn’t even notice how much was gone.” Pamela didn’t want to admit how much she had to drink on Christmas Eve either.

Randy sat there with many questions, still confused by all the technical jargon that Dr. Heilburg had presented. He said, “Rachel does not seem to be the type of girl who would start drinking this young. I’ll be sure to have those items locked up.”

Dr. Heilburg replied, “She admitted that was her first time and it was just a case of teenage curiosity , but yes, make sure the alcohol is locked up for now on.”

“So there is nothing wrong with her?” asked Pamela.

“Not at all. I strongly believe we have nothing to worry about,” said Dr. Heilburg. “How has her behavior been over the last few days?”

Pamela and Randy looked at each other before Pamela spoke up, “She seems to be acting like normal. She has been spending a lot of time with her friend Kirsten since they are on winter break. She goes back to school next week for a new semester.”

“Yes, she was telling me how excited she is to start a new term,” said Dr. Heilburg.

“She’s a very good student,” said Randy.

“I’m sure she will continue to succeed,” said Dr. Heilburg. “If there are any other occurrences of displaced memory, do not hesitate to call me.”

“Thank you so much for your help!” said Pamela.

During the car ride back home, an excited Rachel sent a text to Kirsten:

Passed with flying colors!

She was still upset about having this old ass phone which made texting harder, but at least it wasn’t T9.

Shortly afterwards, she received a response from Kirsten:

GREATTTTT!!!! :) SO PROUD! Whtcha doin New Year’s Eve?

Rachel had not planned on doing anything for New Year’s Eve since she was in no mood for celebration. She couldn’t even remember what she did on New Year’s 2006, several years ago. For the next few nights, unless Kirsten came over, she planned on spending the entire night doing some studying on girlhood, and also looking for other ways to change back online.

“Surely this had happened to someone else who had similar memories?” Rachel thought, and she hoped she wasn’t alone in her battle to find a cure for her sex change. Rather than put Kirsten in the middle again, she decided to play the role of a good girl and replied:

Probably just study.

Kirsten replied:

Gawd you are such a goodie good LOL! Chelsea is having a giant sleepover party and UR obviously invited. Time to test your skills of girlishness!

CHAPTER TEN

Slumber Party

Rachel wished that she could admit that she was having fun with the girls, but that wasn't the case. The slumber party started with some snacks and listening to music, and not had gravitated to watching *Mean Girls* again. She had been forced to watch the movie with Kirsten the other night, since it was the groups favorite movie, and Kristen forced her to memorize quotes from it. That had been Rachel's first time even seeing the film since she had no interest in it back when she was a man. There was also apparently a movie called *Sleepover* that she was going to have to watch at some point.

A female slumber party wasn't as cliché as Rachel first imagined. She wasn't forced to get a manicure or have her hair done. She remembered the girls vaguely from high school, but now she was one of them. They seemed much more friendly when around each other than what she could remember from the aughts.

Rather than jumping straight into pajamas, Rachel wore a blue skirt with a black blouse and a matching bra underneath. Only in a few days, she had mastered the art of putting on a bra, as Kirsten had shown her various ways she could do so, such as putting the straps under her arms, then cupping her breasts, and finally clasping the hooks. Or cupping her breasts first, hooking, and then putting her arms through.

At least wearing panties was a simpler task, although thongs still felt weird as the fabric rode up her butt all the time. That's why she chose to wear panties tonight. Kirsten had stated that they wanted to dress up for fun since it was an important holiday.

Rachel had packed a pink gym bag with a cosmetic bag and pajamas, along with a few personal items and a hair brush. Walking in heels took a little practice, but since she now had the feet of an angel, the process was easier than she'd expected.

She practiced in front of Kirsten and stumbled a few times which amused Kirsten but also pissed her off at the same time. Within a few days however,

Rachel walked more naturally while wearing three-inch heels on her dainty feet.

So far, Rachel was passing as one of the girls. She had texted a few of them over the last few days, but being with them in person was a lot more demanding. Although Rachel had girlfriends and female friends in her male life, there was a different feeling having the physical appearance of a female and being forced to act like one around them.

The girls seemed to have a closer bond and were more open to sharing personal things. They were so intimate when they were around each other. Even simple girlie things like using a hairbrush as a microphone and gossiping were challenging. Rachel was hoping this charade wouldn't have to last for too long.

Searches online for a magical transformation solution in the past few days produced a few promising results, but nothing concrete. She had even tried a few spells she found on some weird websites, but nothing worked. There was also some weird book from a country that no longer exists she had heard of online that could transform people, but she dismissed it as folklore.

Kirsten smiled at her friend as she felt happy with Rachel there. Although it was a last minute idea to have a slumber party for New Year's Eve, this was the perfect opportunity for Rachel to develop a sense of belonging among their friends. Plus, Kirsten could feel like she truly had her friend back, as Rachel was supposed to act feminine all night and of course, not mention the transformation to the other friends.

Chelsea was a skinny brunette wearing a white blouse and pink skirt. She was hosting the party. She wore heavy eye makeup and had a very distinctive smile. She laughed a lot, and was constantly talking to the other girls about boys. "It's so great that you got back with Matt!" she said to Rachel.

She forced a smile, "Yeah, I missed him!"

Chelsea said sarcastically, "A day is a long time without a boyfriend!"

Rachel forced a laugh, “Haha. How are you and Joey?”

“Great, he’s a little upset that I didn’t come to his house tonight for New Year’s but oh well, he’ll get over it.”

Rachel had noticed throughout the night that Chelsea was a little passive-aggressive and somewhat of a bitch, but also had a twisted sweet side. These teenage girls were somewhat unpredictable.

The ladies continued watching the movie and engaging in small talk before switching to a live television feed from Times Square about thirty minutes before midnight. Even though it had been about a week since the gender transformation and going back in time, Rachel will still amazed at the flashback of living in 2005 again. Long forgotten artists and personalities were featured on the show. She missed the more advanced technology of the future almost as much as she missed her male anatomy. She wondered if magical New Year’s wishes could help her escape the prison of femininity.

As the moment came down to the final minute of 2005, Rachel prepared her wish. The girls counted down together.

“Five... Four... Three... Two... One... Happy New Year!”

Nothing happened of course. Instead, Rachel was greeted with various hugs from her new friends who shook each other sideways in addition to grabbing each other’s bodies. Had Rachel been a 15-year-old boy, she probably would have gotten an erection by touching these pretty girls, but those feelings had worn off. No sexual thoughts about girls came to mind, thanks to the new hormones in her body.

Rachel wasn’t attracted to girls anymore, but she also wasn’t craving some D just yet. She had seen Ryan only once, and reluctantly accepted a few kisses from him. She still felt awkward kissing a boy, and it did nothing for her emotionally or physically. She planned on going to the movies with him in a few days, and she wondered if her sexual feelings would change while she was stuck as a girl.

The next few hours were spent changing into pajamas and engaging in more girl talk. Rachel managed to see all of the girls in bras and panties, something she was going to experience a lot with her new female friends.

Dee had thin red hair and many freckles over her pale body. She was considered the good girl of the group since she was super nice to everyone and always had a smile on her face.

“Are those new pajamas you got for Christmas?” she asked Rachel.

She responded, “Yeah.”

“They are cute!” said Dee.

Rachel’s pajamas were from VS Pink. They had dark red letters along the butt and a pink and white jersey style top, of course more feminine than what she was used to.

“Thanks. Yours are too!” said Rachel to Dee with a smile. Rachel thought she had been very good at restating facts and responding to questions, however Kirsten noticed that she needed to improve on carrying on a conversation with the girls. Just another thing on the list for feminization practice.

Towards the end of the night, Rachel went to use the bathroom. As she pulled her pajama pants down to sit on the toilet, she noticed there were a few wet marks in her panties. Since they were black and she could not identify what it was, she wiped the panties with a piece of toilet paper and saw that it was red.

‘Is that blood?’ she asked herself.

Nervously, she picked up her cell phone and sent a text to Kirsten rather than embarrassingly yell out that she needed her in the bathroom down the hall where the others could hear:

Need you in bathroom with me. NOW!!!! Emergency!

Kirsten came running down the hall and knocked on the door which Rachel had unlocked. “What’s the matter?!” she asked concerned.

“I just found blood in my panties!” said Rachel, still unsure on what was happening, although she had somewhat of an idea.

Kirsten laughed, “Oh, haha. I thought it was something serious.”

“I think it is!” said Rachel.

“You are starting your period Rachel! It’s probably from being around me a lot and around the other girls tonight. Terri and Felicia are on theirs and I’m spotting right now.”

Unsure of what that meant, Rachel said, “What the fuck? I’m menstruating?! What am I supposed to do?”

Kirsten laughed again, “It’s not that big of a deal. Hold on and I’ll go grab a tampon for you, and show you how to put it in.”

Rachel cursed at herself, “Yuck, why do I have a feeling I’m going to hate this?!”

“None of us like it. Welcome to womanhood,” Kirsten smiled.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On a Date with Matt

“I’m on my period!” Rachel said angrily to Matt on their date on New Year’s Day.

Matt became slightly angry as well, “I figured that was happening, but to be honest with you, I’m okay with doing it while that is happening.”

Rachel had taken the effort to look cute that night, since she was trying to keep the persona up, but she didn’t know that going on a date with Matt again would be hell. It started with him getting touchy feely, especially in the movie theater. He kept putting his hand up her skirt even though she kept pushing it away.

Having his arm around her shoulders was hard enough. Now that they were in his car in the parking lot, he was trying to pressure her into going all the way. He was clearly horny, after having an erection and thinking about sex most of the night.

“Look Matt. Seriously this needs to stop. I’m not ready to have sex with you.”

“Then when is it going to be Rachel?! We have been dating for some time now and this is driving me insane. All the other people I know do it like within the first month,” he begged, getting more pathetic by the moment.

If there was anyone Rachel wanted to avoid in her new life, it was Matt. She didn’t know what her female self ever saw in him. On the surface, it seemed like they were attracted to each other because of their athletic lifestyle and some shared interests, but in reality, she didn’t really like him. His jokes were bad and even worse, since he was a teenage boy, his hormones were raging. Maybe it was just the male side of Rachel still there, hoping to break up.

“Matt, I’m not ready at all.”

“Well when are you going to be ready?” he asked.

“I don’t know! Just not now,” Rachel said.

“You told me the other week that you would have sex with me in 2006,” Matt complained.

“It’s New Year’s Day! You can fucking wait more than one day,” said Rachel.

Matt replied, “I’ve been waiting forever.”

Rachel tried desperately to end the conversation, “Matt...maybe later this year. I’m still really young. You can’t keep pressuring girls to have sex with you. It’s not going to work. Your game is weak.”

“What about head?” asked Matt.

“Are you fucking kidding me? That’s not attractive at all!”

“Rachel!” he yelled. “You’ve given it to me before!”

She caught herself having the terrible memory of Kirsten telling her that she had gone down on Matt before and how much she hated it since he didn’t shave his pubic area at all and she nearly gagged in the process. The memory was something she truly wanted to vanish.

Instead of continuing to hurt Matt’s feelings and leaving him with no hope of any sexual activity, she said, “Matt... I really like you, but please stop. I’m just not in a good mood right now and, although I’ll suck your dick again, it won’t be tonight. But I promise it will happen.” The last part was a lie, but Rachel was thinking at least she didn’t put a deadline on the promise.

“Fine....” Matt said.

Rachel smiled, “Thanks! Now can you please take me home?”

The rest of the conversation was minimal as Rachel was desperately hoping for a legitimate reason to break up with Matt. She did manage to let him kiss her at the end, which meant having his tongue massage hers as she tried to keep up the illusion that she was still into him. Feeling his erection through his pants disgusted Rachel, but desperate times call for desperate measures. When she got back into her bedroom, she started texting Kirsten again:

Please let this end! He's trying to have sex with me.

Kirsten responded:

EWWW. Guys never give up :(

Rachel said:

That is something I'll delay for as long as I can. Yeah, not happening.

Kirsten said:

Just keep it up. Excited for tomorrow?!

Rachel was reminded that they had to go back to school after the short winter break. It would be her first time at the high school since graduating. She was surprised her parents even let her have a date on a school night. Then again, when she was Ryan, she didn't date much until her senior year. Maybe they had a different outlook now that their daughter was in a relationship? She couldn't even remember what rules they had for Madison.

Yeah, I guess.

Kirsten responded:

Whatcha wearing?

That had been the last thing on Rachel's mind, although she had been instructed to plan a cute outfit. She ended up sending Kirsten a pic of a few ideas she had, most of which involved jeans and a t-shirt. Kirsten suggested

dressing it up a little with a cardigan and some jewelry.

After chatting for a few hours, Rachel did her nightly routine; looking online for ways to transform back into a man, and looking for the diary that Kirsten had mentioned a few days ago. Both were unsuccessful efforts.

As Rachel laid in bed trying to fall asleep, since she would have to wake up early for school, she wondered if she was wasting her time trying to change back. Maybe all of this was permanent. The thought of staying a girl for the rest of her life scared her. Thoughts of getting married and pregnant came to her mind, but those were voluntary actions after all. Nothing said that she had to remain girly for the rest of her life.

Even coming out as transgender and then transitioning into a male as Kirsten suggested was a consideration at this point. She promised herself that her efforts to go back to how she was would continue, even if she had to wait for the entire year for Christmas to roll around again.

The other option she thought of was a birthday wish. May 20th was still a long while away, but it was sooner than Christmas. In the meantime, she thought about how she would have to relive high school, this time as a cheerleader. She braced herself to flash many fake smiles tomorrow, as she would continue her happy girl act.

CHAPTER TWELVE

School Semester

The first day of the school semester started just as Rachel remembered, with her mom yelling at her to get up. The morning routine was the same, using the bathroom and taking a shower, except this time Rachel had to put in a fresh tampon. She hoped her stupid period would end soon, especially since bloating and cramps sucked.

Getting ready in the morning took about thirty minutes longer than she remembered which was the reason she was waking up at the crack of dawn. After Rachel got dressed in her tight jeans, shirt, and white cardigan, she began doing her makeup which included a foundation base, mascara, and rose lipstick that accented her face very well. She used a few techniques that Kirsten had shown her using a flat iron and hair brush, leaving her hair to fall in feminine grace.

Before today, she had reviewed her classes for the new tenth grade semester. Some of the classes and teachers' names looked familiar, but Rachel only had a vague memory of that far back in high school, and she couldn't remember the classes she had that well.

After grabbing her pink Jansport backpack, Rachel put on her peacoat and went out the door with Madison and Pamela, who was driving them to school. On the way to the high school, Rachel's nerves started to frazzle as she had rushes of memories come back to her.

In the main hall, where students congregated before first period, Rachel was amazed at the mid-2000s fashion she saw. Walking around looking for Kirsten, she noticed several boys staring at her, some she recognized, and some she didn't. It was almost like a high school reunion.

"Rachel!" Kirsten yelled out from near a water fountain.

"Hey," said Rachel as she approached her friend who was standing with Chelsea and Dee.

Chelsea said to Rachel, “Oh my god, your hair looks so pretty today!”

Rachel actually blushed at the compliment. Her efforts at feminizing herself were apparently paying off. The group exchanged some small talk before the announcement to go to home room came over the intercom. It was a reminder than Rachel was back under strict adult control.

When Rachel entered her first period class, some students were already seated while others were standing around talking. Glancing around the Algebra I classroom, Rachel was shocked when she saw Alex sitting at a table by the window. The table had an empty seat. She then remembered she had been in this class before as Ryan, and he sat at that table next to Alex. Something inside her compelled her to sit by him.

“We meet again...” Rachel said as she sat down next to Alex.

Alex was shocked that Rachel was talking to him again. She looked really hot, and had the perfect body as usual. “Hey...” he said calmly.

Rachel reminded him, “Again, what happened the other week stays secret. You haven’t told anyone have you?”

“Of course not,” he replied. “It’s also kind of weird that you want to sit by me now.”

“It’s a long story,” she said. “But it looks like we were meant to meet after all so, hi there neighbor!”

Alex laughed at her style of humor. “Sounds good, as long as this teacher doesn’t change seating the first thing in class.”

“Not going to happen,” Rachel said before placing her manicured hand over her mouth. She had been very good about not revealing anything about the future in the past week, but she slipped. Maybe it was because she was finally with somebody she felt comfortable around. Even when she was with Matt, she didn’t feel like speaking guy talk, especially since Matt was trying to get

in her panties.

“Cool,” said Alex.

The rest of the school day followed with classes similar to what she had taken during her original sophomore year. She did not have any classes with Kirsten, but did have some with other girls in the clique.

Rachel was surprised at the amount of people who talked to her in the hallways asking about her winter break. It confirmed her status as one of the popular girls. The hungry stares from the boys still felt weird, and reminded Rachel of the efforts she had made to train herself to be a pretty girl in such a short time.

Matt eventually saw her in the hall. She felt uncomfortable holding his hand while walking to class and kissing him occasionally, but she had to appear happy in his embrace. She did notice him paying attention to other girls as they walked through the halls, but it didn't bother her at all. She considered it typical teenage boy stuff.

Being treated like a young girl by the staff felt weird. She was going to take some time getting used to that. Rachel could remember some teachers were more relaxed, while others were strict. It seemed like the female teachers smiled at her more than when she was a male. She also had to pay attention and respond when someone called her 'Miss.'

Lunch with the girls was one of the highlights of the day, as it gave her a bit of break from boring, redundant material in the classroom that she had already been through before. Rachel did question the maturity level of some of the girls, especially after spending the night with them the other night, and now having lunch with them everyday for the year. She was relieved to find that she didn't have physical education class, and that her locker in the gym was for cheerleading.

She also learned that cheerleading would begin again starting next week,

which would mean definitely doing some routines with the girls at home in order to get back in shape for shaking her butt on the courts. She prayed for an escape route.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Cheer Time

Even though it was wintertime and had cooled down over the past week, Rachel, Kirsten, and Terri were sweating their asses off as they practiced their cheerleading moves at Kirsten's house. In the past few days, Kirsten had been helping Rachel one-on-one, making her familiar with basic moves such as right punch up, high/low V, daggers, Broken T, a front lunge, and clasp.

Rachel didn't find any of it too hard, but it was awkward doing the moves in front of a mirror and realizing that the pretty cheerleader was her, not to mention the fact that she would soon have to wear a short skirted cheerleading uniform while doing them. She was also amazed at her ability to do a split, but not having a nasty penis in the way helped with the more demanding motions.

Thankfully, her period was over. From what Kristen told her, she knew that she would probably get it again the next time her female friends did. Until their synced up cycles brought their 'Aunt Flo' back, they could finally wear white shorts again.

The girls finished practicing a dance routine to *Check On It* by Beyoncé. Rachel had a sports bra under her Cheer Forever gray t-shirt and pink gym shorts with a G-string underneath. Her hair had been pulled back in a tight, high pony tail. She realized sadly that despite being a girl for only a few weeks, she had become more used to this body.

"Geez Rachel. Are you feeling okay?" asked Terri.

"Yes, why?" Rachel replied before taking a sip from her water bottle.

"You usually pick up on these new routines pretty quickly, and are more vocal when it comes to decisions. Rough winter break maybe?" said Terri. Of course she didn't have a clue about the transformation or the fact that her friend had no prior cheerleading experience.

“Just getting back into the motion! I’m trying!” said Rachel looking for an excuse and hoping Terri didn’t catch on.

Kirsten backed up Rachel, “You are doing great! I can’t believe the first game of the year is this weekend. Gosh, there’s so much to take care of.”

“You are telling me...” said Rachel.

By the time the first basketball game of the 2006 season rolled around, Rachel’s natural cheerleading abilities had come out. She made a few mistakes during the game, but she was quick to recover from them. Wearing the tiny skirt of the teal and ivory uniform that showed her bloomers made her feel more feminine, but it was the giant poofy and curled hairstyle with what seemed like three pounds of makeup that confirmed her status as a girl. Performing in unison with the other cheerleaders in a routine, made her feel like one of the girls, and a success. She couldn’t thank Kirsten enough since, without her, she would probably be wearing a straight jacket instead of a cheerleading uniform.

Two events had occurred since the start of school that made Rachel question her future. The first was her failure to find anything online that would change her back. Nothing she tried seemed to work. She was spending four to five hours a night looking for information at first, but that had diminished to two to three since school started due to homework requirements.

Schoolwork was more difficult than expected since Rachel had forgotten many of the concepts and facts. She had never used in real life, and had last thought about them in high school ten years ago. Her parents had her do some chores such as cleaning and doing dishes which was also cutting into her escape research. Her hopes were diminishing until she thought of another plan, although that failed as well.

Madison’s tenth birthday was on January 13th. In the last few weeks, their relationship had been somewhat better than it was than when Rachel was a boy. As two sisters they had more interests in common, and spent a lot of

time playing games and watching movies together, things a 15-year-old boy would hate doing with his younger sister.

Rachel wondered if Madison made a birthday wish somehow directed at changing her back, if it would actually work. Her heart was broken as Madison announced out loud at her party that she wanted a pony before blowing out her candles. This sealed the fact that Rachel was going to be stuck like this at least for another few months.

The next best scenario was if Rachel made a wish on her sixteenth birthday as she blew out the candles, and didn't tell anyone what she wished for. However, that wouldn't be until May 20th, almost till the rest of the school year. That would mean having to be a girlfriend, continue cheerleading, staying as her parents' little princess, and getting extremely busy with teen factors such as PSAT study, school work, and Driver's Ed come the spring time.

All of that was overwhelming Rachel, but her commitment stayed strong. The last few weeks had been emotionally damaging to her masculinity, even what was left of it, but she was determined to not stay in her current situation. It would just take some time and patience to adjust fully to living as a female.

"You did really great for the first game!" said Kirsten as they walked through the school to Kirsten's mom's car after the game.

"Thanks," said Rachel. "You helped me a lot, and I am truly grateful."

"No problem!" said Kirsten, as she adjusted the strap on her heavy pink gym bag. Both of the girls still had their cheerleading hair style and makeup on, but had changed into sweats and hoodies. Rachel wore one that her parents gave her for Christmas.

"Seriously Kirsten... I wouldn't have gotten through this if it weren't for you. You are truly a special person, and I'm so sorry I doubted you before based on my perceptions from the past," said Rachel.

Kirsten was a little uncomfortable having this conversation within the

confines of the school. “Umm, Rachel... there is something I have been meaning to ask you.”

“What’s up?” asked Rachel.

“It has been fun kind of gaining you back as a friend, but something just doesn’t feel complete, and I think if you do something it will be better for you as well.”

“What’s that?” questioned Rachel.

“You told me the other night that you haven’t had a chance to do as much research or whatever you want to call it... you know... how to do the thing you want. Plus, you said whatever you tried before failed. As much as I love you, it’s disheartening when you keep referring to right now as the past and talk about how you keep trying to switch back.”

Rachel replied, “Sorry, but that’s all I know, and it’s what I want to do.”

“I understand,” said Kirsten. “I mean you made the adjustments to blend in to not have your family get upset, and to have everything become normal with everyone at school. You said Alex hasn’t told anyone, and you have been happier since you’ve gained at least one friend back. But it seems like the only person who isn’t completely happy and content right now is me.”

“Where are you going with this?” asked Rachel.

“Do you think you can try not mentioning any of... that stuff for awhile?” she asked.

“Can you be more specific?”

“All of this stuff about switching back... until you are absolutely sure it is going to happen. You have said something about it every day, but everything fails. I mean you may be stuck like this for a long time, and it’s going to get really annoying after a while. What I’m asking is for you to stop mentioning it around me, and for you to just relax a bit and be my friend. All in girl mode

by the way. You've been doing really well the last few weeks, but since your attempts have failed, its time to take the next step and do girl mode 24/7, as if you were never a boy."

Rachel paused for a moment, "Kirsten, that's asking a lot. My personality hasn't changed, and there's a lot on my mind."

"Maybe that's it though! Maybe, if you play the part fully, then things will be easier. Plus, I can be completely happy!" Kirsten smiled.

As Rachel and Kirsten approached the exit, Rachel thought to herself that she could do what Kirsten wanted, and still continue her efforts, even if she had less time for that now. If it would be months before she could transform back, and it might be beneficial to just make the best of it.

She didn't want to admit it, but adjusting had been easier than she expected. Maybe if she went fully in, some type of spirit would understand she learned her lesson and help transform her back into Ryan. Rachel looked at Kirsten and said, "I guess I'll give it a try."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Time and Thigh Gaps

Rachel kept her promise and continued to act like a girl in all circumstances with everyone in her life. She picked up on the fact that her friendship with Kirsten and the other girls continued to improve the girlier she acted, since it was like she was her old self again.

The time she spent online looking for ways to switch back was quickly being replaced by working on new hairstyles and makeup challenges. Being in the entertainment industry before, Rachel (as Ryan) had keen knowledge of the growth and success of YouTube and beauty gurus with content channels in 2015. She continued to debate whether to start her own, but the 2006 version of YouTube was very basic. Plus, she had to promise herself to live life as normal, with no expert knowledge on ways to get rich.

Her relationship with her mother seemed closer now that she was a female. It felt great to spend more time with her after not seeing her for so long, even if it involved shopping trips. Her dad's personality seemed to be the same, although she could tell there were some differences. He hung out with friends more, probably in an effort to get out of a house full of women. Although he was more affectionate with Pamela, showing that Rachel's conclusion was true, that they probably wouldn't get divorced if she stayed a girl. The thought crossed her mind only a few times, but the failure of magic spells was the main culprit for this.

The biggest change for January was that Matt broke up with her. It was completely unexpected, and the asshole did it through a text. Rachel was surprised but not upset. When talking about it with Kirsten, she had to break character, and they came to the conclusion that it was supposed to happen.

Matt broke up with her with the lame excuse that he wanted a girl who was actually going to put out. That was the part that actually hurt Rachel's feelings, since she knew he was going to try to take advantage of other girls. Upon hearing the news that Rachel was single, many boys around school started hitting on her hard, including Alex. They started to become friends

again, and their parents even let them hang out together at home. He admitted that he found Rachel extremely beautiful, and they had more in common than he thought, but could get over the fact that at one time, Rachel was a man.

Rachel laughed it off and told him she was flattered, but would not feel the same if they dated and she then transformed back into a man with memories of dating her guy friend, one of the few times she broke character. The let down hurt Alex, although Rachel made him feel better by saying she would give him a little advice about how to get girls. She was becoming more experienced in the subject by being a pretty young girl who was constantly hit on.

Although she still was not attracted to the opposite sex, she would be lying if she said she didn't like the attention. Something about it made her feel special, especially after spending a lot of time to look beautiful in the morning using her improving hair and makeup skills.

She spent Valentine's Day in February hanging out with female friends. It surprised Rachel that her group were some of the hottest girls in school, yet none of them had steady boyfriends. After a while, she started to learn the truth. That attractive women have the same insecurities as everyone else. Spending day to day with the cheer circle allowed her to learn how women think and this rubbed off on her.

Rachel started to subconsciously make the same gestures as the other girls when their mood changed, and changing the syntax and pitch of her voice when she became excited or annoyed. Because of this, Kirsten was happier, knowing her friend was almost fully back. She was still sad to think that Rachel wanted to return to being a boy, but it only came up in conversation when absolutely necessary.

By March, having a period seemed natural for Rachel, although it was still a disgusting ordeal. Her mood fluctuated more rapidly, and she understood why some women were so pissy when they were on it. Her nipples became sensitive during these times as well. Over the course of only three months, Rachel noticed her bras were getting tighter, and decided to talk with her mom about it. It was determined in VS that Rachel's cup size had expanded,

and she could now fill a D-cup. She worried that they would continue to grow.

Her height remained constant along with her weight, although it was being redistributed thanks to her shrinking thighs giving her a bit of thigh gap to go with her large breasts. For the first time in months, she was able to get behind the wheel of a car as she started Driver's Ed. Her parents were very impressed at how quickly she managed to pick up driving habits, although Rachel had a bit of trouble with her legs in the car as it felt weird driving a car as a shorter person.

If she kept this up she would have a learner's permit soon, and then a driver's license in the summer. It gave her something else to look forward to, as one of the most annoying aspects of being a teenager was having to rely on her parents for rides. A few of her friends were getting their permits as well, so hopefully they would all be driving soon.

In April, Kirsten started talking to this one boy at school named Drew. She would go on and on about him to Rachel, who actually started to care about what Kirsten had to say about everything. Their friendship had grown strong, and even though Rachel was still on the border of asexual, she gave insight into how Drew thought about her from a guy's perspective without breaking character.

The amount of girl talk and relationship advice made Kirsten recommend that Rachel start dating boys. The attention was still constant, and Kirsten said she may actually have fun with it. After careful consideration, Rachel decided against it. The subject of virginity started to come up more and more, and Kirsten announced that she wanted to lose it after she turned 16 in June.

Rachel was turning 16 next month, and felt more like a teenager now than months ago. Something about the peer pressure made her think about sex, although it was more about experimentation. She had been masturbating regularly, but didn't even think about oral sex. This was the chance to either experiment with lesbian sex or finally find out what it's like to have a guy inside of you. Although there was no strong attraction, she kept these thoughts in the back of her mind, and Kirsten agreed that she would date boys

and maybe even have sex when she knew it was right. Whether Rachel liked it or not, she was taking another step towards complete womanhood every day.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Sweet 16

On the day of her 16th birthday, Rachel was torn between excitement and hope that her ordeal might be ending. She was excited to have her first boy/girl party with all of her family and friends. More than 100 guests would celebrate her sweet sixteen at a fancy banquet hall.

Her parents had gone all out with catering, decorations, DJ, and the \$550 dress that Rachel chose while dress shopping with Kirsten, Pamela, her Aunt Lisa, and her cousin Arianna. They all had ‘helped’ by suggesting one or two items for her to try, but the ultimate decision was Rachel’s.

Rachel tried to keep herself focused on her effort to reverse this gender change. She knew she had been changing emotionally and psychologically over the past months, thanks to the female hormones running through her system and even from her efforts to cope with social situations. However, this was her birthday and a celebration of her age, and also the latest round in her battle against accepting feminization and becoming one of the girls.

She felt like her femininity was at its peak. Ever since the transformation, she had never been so happy as a girl. She felt some second thoughts about the dress she almost picked out. A bright pink Tiffany Designs dress with a beaded bodice and tulle skirt that flared out quite a bit. The straps were thick in order to hold up the weight of the dress, something that made Rachel feel a little strange as this was the most feminine dress she had worn. It was sleeveless, showing off her smooth, thin arms and the skirting came up to about three inches above her knees. The back of the dress had thick straps that needed to be tied down the middle. Her mixed feelings over her outfit were typical of a teen girl.

Rachel painstakingly selected her jewelry and makeup for her big day. There were two bracelets on her right hand and a charm bracelet on the left. She wore two cute rings and dangly, feminine earrings. She had spent about thirty minutes doing her makeup with Kirsten’s help before the other guests arrived while her parents were in the banquet hall finishing preparations with some

other family members.

Rachel curled almost every inch off its length, then pulled back and to the side in a sophisticated up-do look. A delicate, gold necklace her parents gave her that morning graced her neck. The teen princess looked in the mirror and smiled at how she looked. “Wow, Kirsten! I look...wow!”

Kirsten nodded behind her in agreement. “Just wow!” Kirsten announced as she took a picture with both her phone and Powershot. She was wearing the cocktail dress Rachel decided against: a beautiful Betsey Johnson blue lacy sheath with a flirty halter top that was fell below her knees. She looked gorgeous in the dress with its flirty layers of ruffles on the bodice. It tied behind her neck with a silky white ribbon. She paired the dress with strappy three-inch sandals in ruby red. The dress showed off her ample breasts and rounded butt, and the tan stockings she wore made her shapely legs look stunning.

“Thank you,” responded Rachel. “Tonight is going to be amazing.”

“It sure is,” said Kirsten.

The two continued to banter for a few minutes before Kirsten brought up the touchy subject. They had talked privately about it before, but Kirsten wanted to confirm Rachel’s decision.

Kirsten asked, “Have you made your final decision...?”

“Yes,” said Rachel. “If the right person comes along, yes I’ll do it.”

Kirsten rolled her eyes at her best friend. “Not your virginity Rachel... transforming ... you know,” said Kirsten as she made a weird smile.

“I was joking!” said Rachel. “Yes, I have. The past few months have been amazing truly. However, this isn’t my life or my place. I have already been here and now I’m back, and I shouldn’t be. Sure, it would be fun to live this life as a teen princess, but I have another life waiting for me with a girlfriend who I miss dearly. I’m going to make the wish tonight.”

Kirsten began to get teary-eyed as she realized this might be her last night with her friend.

“Awww, don’t cry, Kirsten! I will never forget the time that we had. I thought it about this a lot, trust me,” Rachel said, hugging her bestie.

“I knew you would love being a girl. Everyone loves you, you are popular, smart, and have great friends. This is a wonderful life Rachel, why would you leave it?” Kirsten begged, trying to get her friend to change her mind.

“I know, but deep down, it just doesn’t seem right. I took your advice and made the best of it. Looking like this feels amazing,” she said as she held out the hem of her dress. “But I need to get back.”

“Okay,” Kirsten said after taking a breath. “I trust you are doing what’s best... but... what if it doesn’t work?”

“That has been on my mind also,” said Rachel. “If by chance I don’t turn back, it’s not the end of the world. There is always Christmas, even though that means staying like this all summer and the first half of Junior year.”

Kirsten broke down and asked pointedly, “Then why not just stay a girl!”

Rachel shrugged, making her earrings swing slightly, “Like I said, something just doesn’t feel right.”

“Have you talked with Alex about this?” asked Kirsten.

“Yes, he is still trying to deal with the fact that I seem to enjoy this. But in reality I do. You were right all along. While I’m stuck like this, I might as well make the best of it. I just hope that if I go back, he is in a better spot than what I saw in 2015, although I’ve been trying my hardest to not talk about that future anymore. You know that,” said Rachel.

“Mhmm, it’s just hard to get over. I feel like I’m going to lose you!” said Kirsten stifling a sob.

“Yeah... there are a lot of bad things involved with this decision, but deep down, I know I have to try to get back to my real life.”

Rachel's Sweet 16 party went very well with the guests eating, drinking, and dancing all night long. They also played fun games, and many won cute little prizes. She felt like Miss Popular since it was a large group of people from school and many said it was the best party they had ever been to.

Everyone treated Rachel like a celebrity, as many of the guests insisted on taking photos with the girl of the hour. Rachel was in hundreds if not thousands of shots commemorating her special night with a professional photographer on site.

She tried not to think about transformation, enjoying her one last night of fun as a female before returning to her male life. When it came time to blow out the candles of the huge birthday cake, she was greeted with a light show of flash photography. Feeling like a special princess was almost as much on her mind the important decision she was still coming to terms with.

The crowd sang Happy Birthday to her and as soon the song reached the end, Rachel thought to herself:

I wish I were a man again...

Rachel blew out the candles, bending over and accidentally giving some of the crowd a cleavage shot as they cheered. She figured she would not know the results of the wish until the next morning, since the last transformation happened that way. Until then, she was going to enjoy the rest of the night.

Kirsten continued feeling unsure about the situation. At one moment, she thought that Rachel had lied to her since she saw her slow dancing with several boys. Maybe she had made the decision to stay a girl after all. Why else would she be dancing with guys? This was all new.

Waking up in the morning, Rachel was still all girl. Her room was exactly the same, with the stuffed animals, boy band posters, and of course makeup and girly girl clothes. Checking the date on her phone, she saw it was May 21, 2006. Nothing had changed.

While she was partly disappointed, and she was feeling she just had to wait a while longer, she also realized that needed to enjoy life—and this was the only life she had.

Rachel felt satisfied that she had come this far as a female. After last night's epic events, she fully embraced the idea that she could have a lot of fun as a girl, at least for the time being.

Immediately, she sent a text to Kirsten:

Yup, still a girl LOL

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Sweet Summer

Rachel let her hair blow freely in the wind on the small boardwalk of Bethany Sea. The ocean air felt extremely relaxing, and a walk by the water was a nice getaway during her family vacation. Kirsten had tagged along, and the girls sat on a bench eating ice cream while debating their next course of action.

Both girls were wearing bikini tops. Kirsten chose a neon Hawaiian print bikini with straps separating each cup, while Rachel wore a Bohemian inspired bikini with Aztec designs to show off her large breasts. Both were wearing denim cut off short-shorts over their bikini bottoms, which they only took off when swimming or tanning.

Both of their tans had improved since the summer began. On this July date, the boardwalk was somewhat busy, and the girls were getting frequent attention from men of all ages. They were trying to look older than they really were, maybe 18 or 19, although they wished they could pass for 21 so they could attempt to sneak into a bar and drink.

Since being forced to continue her womanhood, Rachel had fully embraced her new life. She was mentioning and even thinking about her life as Ryan less and less. Now, the topic wasn't even brought up unless Kirsten asked her a question about it.

"God damn that guy was hot," said Kirsten after a group of four guys in their late-teens walked by. She was referring to the one with shaggy hair and a six-pack with big muscles.

"Why didn't they come over here! I liked the one on that skateboard," Rachel admitted.

Rachel's biggest change over the summer, other than the lack of interest in her life as Ryan, was her changing sexual orientation. This was mostly due to the chemistry in her body, making her feel like an ordinary teen girl, attracted

to men. It had been building up for weeks, and a lot of soul-searching, Rachel finally came to terms with it. She opened up to Kirsten and Alex about it a few weeks ago.

Alex, only half joking, said that it was a sign that there was still a chance for them. He dreamed of being the one to take her virginity, but that would never happen with Rachel.

Kirsten figured out the type of guys Rachel was into, not so much the jock type but more the guys with somewhat long hair who were also muscular. She enjoyed boys who could hold a conversation and had a variety of interests. She assumed that this was because—as Ryan—Rachel had more dating experience than Kirsten, even if that dating experience was with women in the past.

Kirsten didn't care as much about personality as she did looks. She was extremely proud of her friend when Rachel confessed she'd made out with a guy while hanging out at the river a few weeks ago.

The girls took another selfie on the beach, with the reflection of the camera showing in their sunglasses. They were happy that their darkening tans helped to show off their pearly white teeth. They then started debating again about what to do next.

"There's that one mini golf place or we can ride bikes," said Kirsten.

"Both sound great. I want to check out some stores too. We need some T-shirts from here as well. God I missed the beach!" said Rachel, having a brief memory of California cross her mind.

"I think I need a break from the sun for a bit. This ice cream helped a little," said Kirsten as the girls started walking.

"Okay, so something indoors...shops it is!" said Rachel.

"What is the game plan tonight, just go with the flow?" asked Kirsten.

Rachel grinned, “I actually had a good idea of something we can do during the night.”

Kirsten motioned with her hands for Rachel to tell her.

“Here’s a clue: I’m ready.”

“What?!?”

Rachel looked around her, making sure no one was within an earshot behind or beside them. “Virginity, gone while we are down here.”

Kirsten bent over in a state of shock as she continued to walk, “RACHEL SARAH SUTTON! SHUT UP!!”

Rachel laughed, “It’s a crazy idea, but I thought about it, and if we are going to do it; it should be down here.”

“WHY?! It’s supposed to be special!” said Kirsten.

“It will be special. Look at it this way, we both said we are ready and wanted to wait until we were 16 to fuck some guy. Dating has been sporadic since then, ‘cause we were so busy! Now, summer is here and we are out of school. Plus, if we do some guys as a one night thing down here, the pressure will be off when we actually find good boyfriends. We will already have done it and have some experience.”

Kirsten didn’t realize the irony of Rachel now putting this sexual peer pressure on her. “And how are we supposed to do this without your parents knowing where we are?”

“There’s a way, just say we are doing something else like laser tag or some shit. Plus, we have our own room at the hotel so it’s not like they are going to keep checking on us. Mom will probably just send a text,” Rachel laughed.

“And what guys? Gosh this feels dirty.”

“That’s the fun part!” laughed Rachel. “I don’t know.... Like you would ride that one guy we just saw that you said you liked, right?”

Kirsten thought about it for a moment and started to smile, “Maybe.”

Rachel smiled, “There are guys galore here at the beach, and we have been getting stares all day. We just need to go up and talk to them with confidence, unless they come up to us first.”

Kirsten did think the idea was dirty, but she was also very curious about it. She wondered if Rachel would have always had this idea, but now she had a hard time thinking Rachel used to be a guy. This was all so confusing!

Rachel made some good points about this being a very memorable event, and how it would relieve the pressure when they went back home and started dating again. The last guy she dated was Drew, but that only lasted for about a month. Kirsten pondered the situation before finally saying, “And what if they ask our age?”

She smiled, “We can lie and say we are 18.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

New School Year

On the first day of their Junior year, Kirsten and Rachel were reunited with many of their friends, some they had not seen over the summer due to jobs, vacations, and other factors.

Outside of their close circle, no one knew that they lost their virginities. They especially didn't want the word to get around that they were sluts. That was far from the truth, but they knew rumors spread especially when word of some hot girl losing her virginity gets out. The circumstances remained a mystery, as Kirsten and Rachel promised that they would keep that secret to themselves.

Rachel was surprised at the experience. Sure, it hurt a little but it felt great at the same time. Nothing about it had felt like anything she had experienced when she had a penis. There were incidents since then where she pleased herself to the thought of having some guy fuck her, something she didn't want to admit, but she mentioned it when talking about sex with her girlfriends.

Rachel and Alex didn't talk about sex too much, surprisingly. He seemed to be happily dating Rachel's ex-girlfriend Sammie. When Rachel thought about it, it made complete sense. It also gave Rachel an excuse to hang out with Sammie again, which was slightly nostalgic but different at the same time since Rachel was in full womanhood now.

There were some social boundaries at first and many people thought it was odd for such different people to start hanging out together, but it was part of growing up and branching out. Rachel even got Kirsten into some Screamo and Post-Hardcore bands, taking her along to see Alex's band playing in shows at the youth centers and other places in town.

The girls started dressing differently depending on the occasion. Sammie even suggested that Rachel form a band with her, giving Rachel the opportunity to play guitar again. It had been nearly a year since she last

played, but she wondered if she could talk her parents into buying her a guitar, unless she wanted to wait until Christmas.

As far as everyone could tell, Rachel was going to have a great Junior year. Her parents gave her their car as a hand-me-down, and it felt great to have some more freedom. She almost like an adult again.

Rachel was continuing her path to college, still trying to choose her major, and determined to get some scholarships and make a decision during senior year, if she couldn't transform back and had to live it out as a girl.

The longer she lived as Rachel, the more she thought about the long term issues that she'd have to face if she had to remain a girl. Being a 16-year-old girl required her to make many decisions and presented lifestyle concerns. With her growing friendships, Rachel was introduced to several boys with dating interests. While Kirsten told her she wanted to get in a relationship with someone, Rachel just wanted to casually date for the time being, at least until she was able to figure things out when it came to this transformation.

The closer it got to Christmas, the harder these challenges became. There were just as many positives as negatives when Rachel drew out a planning form for the decision. It wasn't something she could just decide on out overnight. As Christmas approached, the holiday spirit hit Rachel. She started wearing red and green, and buying scented products at Bath, Bed, and Forward as well as Shower and Body Works including shampoos, soaps, candles, and other girly things.

Her Christmas Wish List, other than 'a penis?' included clothes, a Fender Strat with amp, a gps, a new car, and a new cell phone--since she knew she would have to wait until June when the iPhone would get released.... That is...if she were still stuck like this after the holidays.

Becoming a sweet princess made Rachel more generous when it came to giving gifts during the holidays, and she even talked her friends into volunteering at a nursing home to spread the holiday cheer. She was showing strong community leadership, and everything else people looked for in an All-American girl.

Rachel considered what she would miss most if she returned to being a boy, but also thought about the many benefits of being an adult male. She already had so many memories of high school, college, and other life events, but as a male. Living as Rachel was completely different. Weighting which life was better was nearly impossible! It was like apples and oranges.

As Christmas Eve approached, Rachel started to accept her fate as it was determined. If she made the wish and it failed, then she was meant to be a girl. If it worked, then she had learned much more about relationships, she could use that experience to her advantage back in adulthood.

This was a complicated situation only made more difficult by the thought of losing so many dear friends that she had grown close to. That did not stop her from completing her Christmas shopping, and having fun picking out gifts to make everyone happy for the holidays.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Last Night

For Christmas Eve dinner, the Sutton family was joined by several family members and friends, including Kirsten. With great food, singing, and fun games, it was one of the best Christmas Eves that Rachel could remember. Just like during her Sweet Sixteenth party, she put off the thought of her wish, and spent the night enjoying herself.

While exchanging gifts, Rachel was thrilled by several items from Kirsten including a photo collage, some jewelry, and a few DVDs to reflect Rachel's changing taste in cinema. Rachel, in exchange, got Kirsten a fancy new digital camera.

Rachel was wearing a blue dress that hugged her boobs and butt tightly. Her hair was neatly combed, and as usual, her makeup immaculate. She wanted to look great for the holiday.

Later in the night, some of the guests started to play board games which jogged Pamela's memory. She said, "I wonder whatever happened to that game Crab Apples we used to have."

"Oh my god! I loved Crab Apples!" Rachel squealed, remembering the game from years before.

Randy said, "I think I saw the board games box while hiding Christmas presents in the attic. Why don't you girls go up there and look?"

"Okay!" Rachel loudly announced, dragging Kirsten by the hand. It had been months since she had been in the attic. She only went up there to put away her summer clothes. She stepped carefully in her blue heels as she clambered up the wooden ladder that pulled down from the ceiling. She hit the light switch to reveal a junky attic.

"Oh, this narrows it down!" Kirsten said sarcastically.

“Ha, my parents like to hoard,” said Rachel as she walked around trying to take careful steps in her heels and not get any dirt or cobwebs on her dress.

“I can tell,” replied Kirsten.

Looking around, the two girls saw items ranging from old mattresses to broken bicycles, and from a battered dollhouse to a jumble of boxes.

“Hmm, look for anything that says games or party on it,” explained Rachel.

They parted ways to make the task of finding the box easier. Rachel saw some plastic tubs that looked like they were brand new and started to look through them.

After a few minutes, Kirsten announced, “I think I found it ugh, this thing is heavy! Can you help me?!”

“Holy crap!” screamed Rachel after going through a box labeled ‘Rachel stuff’.

“What is it?” asked Kirsten.

“Look what I just found!” Rachel said, holding up a pink marble nine-inch book with ‘diary’ written across the front cover in a cursive script.

“Your diary!” said Kirsten. “Oh my god, you found it!”

There was a look of accomplishment on Rachel’s face as she held the book. After spending nearly a year as a girl, and forgetting about this book, the journal detailing her life as a girl had finally been found. The difficulty of plugging in her life had been an obstacle. Had she found this back in December or January, it would have been helpful to her transition and survival as a teenage girl.

Rachel debated the pros and cons of reading the book. Shrugging, she skimmed through the first few pages, noticing that the first entry was on March 4, 2004 and the diary only seemed to be filled about three-fourths of

the way. Even without the diary, she knew she had made incredible progress as a woman.

Rachel smiled, “How did it end up here? I thought it was gone forever. Really didn’t think anything of it after all the failed attempts at finding it.”

Kirsten said, “Well, are you going to read it?”

Rachel paused before saying, “This could be my last night as a girl. So many wonderful things have happened over the last year. I just don’t know if it is best to get to know myself from...before. I truly believe that I need to get back to 2015 and my male life, but it could be fun to see some very personal things in my life back before the transformation. No matter what happens, if this doesn’t work tonight, I think I’m going to give up on trying to transform again.”

Flipping her hair, Kirsten said, “I’m sure some very personal things are in that diary. Things you never even told me. But of course you could just put it down and think about the person you’ve become over the passed year without having to worry about the past anymore. What are you going to do?”

Option 1: Rachel reads the diary and enjoys the rest of Christmas Eve.

Option 2: Rachel puts the diary down and enjoys the rest of Christmas Eve.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Option 1: Christmas 2006

“I guess it won’t hurt if I look through it a little,” Rachel explained.

Kirsten smiled, “I would have done the same thing!”

Rachel kept smiling as she browsed through the first few pages of the book. In the diary, she noticed her handwriting was much more feminine than it was now. In the first entry, she mentioned that she bought the diary at a bookstore downtown and was excited to start detailing aspects of life.

There were some mundane details, such as what she ate that day and who she was hanging out with that weekend. She skipped around over the next few minutes while Kirsten continued looking through some boxes in the attic. Rachel then decided to just read the end of the writing, as that would have been the last entry before the transformation occurred.

Kirsten did not notice it at first, but Rachel’s reaction turned from happy to neutral, then Rachel felt extreme tension in her body and started to become nervous. Her palms became sweaty, and her blood pressure started rising. Tears even started to fall.

In a soft voice, Rachel said, “Kirsten....”

Turning toward Rachel, Kirsten noticed her friend was visibly upset. “What’s wrong?!” she asked.

Rachel took a breath and she continued to skim the entry, marked December 24, 2005. She made it to the end and then erupted in tears.

“Oh my god, can you tell me what it says!” asked Kirsten.

Rachel shook her head yes as tears ran down her mascaraed eyes. She took another deep, ragged breath and started reading the entry out loud:

It is Christmas Eve. Kirsten and I were hanging out for a bit today and then we had family dinner. Matt keeps saying he is really excited to come over for dinner tomorrow. It's nice and everything, but I should be happier. On the surface, everyone thinks that I am happy. I am in some ways, but in others I feel like crap. Matt keeps asking me for sex, and I'm just not ready. I think he expects it as a Christmas present this year, but he is going to be playing that video game more than playing with parts of my body.

And ugh, my parents keep pressuring me about college choices and that is years away. It's not like I need to pick everything I want to do. I just know I want to do teaching. But in some ways, I don't because my other friends want to. Part of me wants to be like them, but other parts make me want to be a little less plain jane and more unique.

Here I am this preppy, popular cheerleader which is great, but kind of cookie cutter. I haven't told anyone, but I want to learn how to play the guitar and maybe join a band. That's just so 'not me' in some ways though. Who is going to want some perky cheerleader in a rock band?

Gosh, speaking of which, it seems like guys have it so much easier. I wish I could just see what it's like to be a guy. All of the ones I know don't seem to have all this drama all the time and inner emotions. It would be fun to be a guy and just forget about ever being a girl. Ha, that would be a unique Christmas present.

Speaking of which, I'm hoping I get that Apple laptop I asked for. Using the family iMac all the time sucks, and I really need my own. That and all of the clothes I asked for would be nice. We'll see what Christmas brings though!

Rachel closed her eyes as she finished reading the entry to Kirsten, and then put her head down. Kirsten came to hug her to help calm her, and was slightly confused herself. She spoke up with Rachel in her arms,

"Rachel... what does all of this mean?"

"I don't know... I really don't... but I think I have an idea," she replied while crying and sniffing. It seemed like tears out of one eye were out of sadness

while tears out of the other were joyous.

Kirsten said what Rachel had been thinking, “You said you wished you were a boy....”

Rachel admitted, “Yes, I did....” Pausing again, she said, “I’m pretty sure it was a joke...but all of those statements....”

Kirsten continued the conversation for her, “Everything came true.... You were always born a girl.... That male life you had was actually the lie. That was from Christmas Eve and when you made the second wish as a boy in the future, it put you back to when you first made the transformation wish... because you were happier back then.”

“Yeah...I mean, judging by this, I was just going through some teenage girl drama. Nothing was that wrong that it couldn’t be solved. Just hormones and usual family pressures. The wish in 2015 sent me back here because it seems like things were better, and I was actually happier as a girl in this universe. It’s like I was always meant to be a girl,” said Rachel.

Kirsten responded, “Exactly...you were born a girl and meant to be one. It’s amazing that you spent so many years as a boy though. What was it, like 10 years? And you never once had a memory of being a girl?”

“Never!” said Rachel. “The entire universe changed to one where I was living as a boy. I had completely different memories of always being a male and had no recollection of transforming into a boy. It could have happened at any point.”

“Wait,” Kirsten stated, “If you came back, then why did you only have memories of being male?”

“Who knows?!” Rachel replied.

“Gosh, this is so crazy!” Kirsten said.

“You are telling me....” Said Rachel, who had finally stopped crying.

“What are you going to do?!” asked Kirsten.

Rachel walked around the attic, “That’s a very good question. I’ve thought about it constantly over the last few months, but this changes everything. Trust me, adapting to a new gender is tough, but I was having a lot of fun having no responsibilities and living a new life. Still, the life I remember is as a boy in the future.”

She took a deep breath and continued, “I was happy there in my personal life, but not happy with what had changed back home, with my family and friends. However, now all of that stuff about the future is a lie. The Butterfly Effect no longer applies. The future hasn’t been written yet. My life as a guy was on an entirely different timeline. I was always born a girl, and never lived passed Christmas Day 2005 as a female. Yet my male life started when I was born until Christmas Eve 2015. This is insane. If I was always meant to be a girl...if I started out as a girl...then my wish that things would ‘go back to the way they were’ reversed the first wish!”

Kirsten took a moment to digest the information. She then asked, “But don’t you think if you make the wish tonight to become a man again, and go back into the future, that it will happen?”

“That’s the thing...” said Rachel. “Even if it did work again, I don’t think it is worth the risk now. It’s probably not a coincidence that I made two wishes on Christmas Eve and they both came true. If I stay a girl, everyone is going to be much happier and have better lives. Still not sure why my gender changed everyone’s lives in that way, but somehow it did.”

“But are YOU going to be happier staying as a girl?” asked Kirsten.

Rachel stood still for a moment before giving a slight grin, “... Yes... I am.”

“Really?!”

“Yes,” Rachel reinforced. “There’s no way I would have said it at first because I didn’t feel that way, but I’ve adapted. The ‘sex change’ was not as

terrible as I expected, and I have enjoyed being your friend, being a daughter, and being a girlfriend. Life is supposed to be this way.”

Kirsten smiled, “I think you made the right decision. Plus, couldn’t you make a wish tonight to just get rid of all your male memories?”

“It’s not worth the risk,” said Rachel. “This has taught me many things about gender identity. Of course, I’m sure the ENTIRE universe didn’t completely change, and some weird things will still happen, but I can’t try to take advantage of it. It’s going to be another struggle, but I’m just going to start erasing my memory as a man and enjoying this life even more right now. It became less stressful over the last few months thanks to my hormones and experiences, and of course you being there for me. I’m happy as a girl now; it’s for the better.”

Kirsten hugged Rachel again, “That’s great. Remember I’m always here for you. Love ya! And make what you said a promise: No more wishes for Christmas!”

The End!

CHAPTER TWENTY

Option 2: Christmas 2006

Rachel closed the diary and held it to her chest, “You know, as much as I am curious, the person who wrote this diary isn’t me. It would have been helpful last year when all this first happened, but I’ve done enough to become Rachel. Looking through this book would solve nothing. I need to make that wish tonight and go back to the future.”

“That’s understandable,” said Kirsten. “But do you mind if I look through it?”

Rachel debated it for a moment, “Sorry Kirsten. You know that I tell you everything, but either you already know everything in here or else this is EXTREMELY personal. I should just throw this in the fireplace when we go back downstairs.”

Kirsten giggled, “Ha, okay. I can respect your decision.”

Later that night, Rachel laid in her bed after masturbating as a female for the last time. Many emotions came to her mind. She had prepared herself carefully to make the wish, but she was still wondering if this was truly the right decision. Over the past year, she had learned how to become a daughter, a sister, a BFF, a girlfriend, a cheerleader, and much more.

Being a teenager again had certain benefits, but also many limitations. If she transformed back into a boy, she would have much more independence and also some struggles. It also would not solve the problem of Rivertowne’s decline, her parent’s divorce, and many other issues. However, it was a risk that had to be taken.

Rachel looked out the window and saw the same star she had seen ‘last’ Christmas Eve, the infamous Christmas star. She hesitated and took a few quick breaths, uncertain of the fate that awaited her. Finally, she spoke out

loud:

“I wish I could return BACK to how things used to be. Living like this has been quite the experience, but I just need to go back to my real life. Back to when Madison and I weren’t as close. Back to when boys weren’t even on my mind as a dating interest. Back to when I didn’t have a fucking period. Back to normal before this transformation took place!”

She then closed her eyes, although it would be awhile before she could fall asleep. She figured she would soon wake up as a boy back in 2015.

As she slept, the mist returned, although this time it was more of a baby pink. As it floated on and into her body, Rachel started transforming again. Starting with her hair, the curls started to flatten, and it became shorter. Several changes occurred in Rachel’s body as her cells started to reshape themselves and internal organs change in texture. Her body continued to mold itself, and the little body hair she had changed.

Rachel’s breasts started to become smaller, soon becoming almost non-existent. Something she would have been very happy about roughly a year ago, and now was becoming reality. The pink mist continued to surround her body, and flooded the entire room. The powerful Christmas spirit was in full effect.

The transformation, like last year’s, occurred over the course of the entire night while Rachel was asleep. In the morning, she was woken up by Pamela opening her door, “Wake up! It’s Christmas!”

Rachel was extremely groggy, but immediately thought about last night and making the wish to return to being a man. Her body definitely felt different as she was no longer the height or weight she was and of course she had no breasts pulling on her chest. She couldn’t recognize the clothing that she had on, but something felt wrong.

As she became more coherent and aware of her surroundings, she noticed her

mom smiling and looking much different as well. Fear came to Rachel as she noticed the room was still bright pink and had a white dresser in front of her bed. There were several toys scattered around the floor, and a huge doll house next to her bed. The curtains had childish Misney characters on them.

She touched parts of her body, noticing that her arms were much smaller. She jumped out of bed startled, while Pamela took it as a sign of excitement. Her height had drastically shrank to maybe three-foot-tall, if that. The bed was much lower to the ground as well, and had Misney characters on the comforter and sheets.

The mirror in front of her confirmed that a transformation had occurred, but not in the way she expected. Rachel could tell she now had the body of a young girl. Judging by her size and the room, probably under the age of six. Looking at her mom, she noticed Pamela was showing signs of late-term pregnancy as her belly was huge.

Her mom also looked drastically younger. The only other person her mom had been pregnant with was her, so that would mean Madison was in Pamela's body. Rachel began to become overwhelmed with the situation and yelled out in her high-pitched childish voice. "Mom!!!"

Pamela looked surprise, "Wow honey, that is the first time you haven't called me mommy. Come on downstairs. Santa came!"

Rachel could not believe the Christmas spirit had transformed her into a younger version of herself. Not only that, but still a girl. Why couldn't she have transformed into a young boy?! At least that would be a step up in her mind. As she followed her mom downstairs, the feeling of being a young girl hit her, as she was wearing childish feminine pajamas. Her hair, while shorter, still hit her shoulders.

Pamela took her little girl's hand and led her downstairs where Rachel saw her dad, who was also looking much younger. Assessing the situation, since Pamela was pregnant with Madison, and Madison was born in January 1996, this would make it certain that it was Christmas 1995, making Rachel five-years-old!

“Merry Christmas Princess!” said Rachel’s dad.

Rachel was still speechless. Her memories of being a man in 2015 and a teenage girl in 2005 were still there, but now she was a young girl in 1995? How had the wish manipulated her into this reality?”

“You need a present to make you happier!” said Randy, noticing his daughter looked sad.

Rachel noticed the amount of gifts in front of the tree, including a tricycle and a large Barbie dress-up mannequin that was nearly the same size as her. Her fate had been sealed. She was back in the past again, but even further in time. Back when life was simpler.

Her wish had come true. She would not have to deal with boyfriends, periods, or any of that other teen girl stuff. She was stuck as a little girl now. It could be too risky to try again next year, as she would completely disappear if the wish put her back another ten years. She now had no choice but to grow up as a girl, making this forever her last wish for Christmas.

The End!

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
Thank You!

I hope you enjoyed reading this story as much as I did writing it! If you found pleasure in this story, please be sure to leave a positive review!

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(We use Pinterest to gather ideas for characters, outfits, settings, and more. Look for the board dealing with the story and you'll see what ideas we had!)

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
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