

CONTEMPORARY

TV FICTION

LAVENDER & LACE



**SOMETIMES IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT CREATES
THE BIGGEST CHANGES... ONE YOUNG MAN'S JOURNEY
FROM LAVENDER INTO LACE!**

VOLUME 70 & 71 - DOUBLE ISSUE

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“Lavender and Lace”

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SANDY THOMAS

QUOTE BOARD

“The question whether a woman is happier than a
man can be no more debated than wondering if a
drunken man is happier than a sober one.”

Apologies to George Bernard Shaw

Lavender and Lace

I

“Mom, am I going to die?” I asked softly.

Dressed in a baggy sweatshirt, my shoulder-length hair tucked under a baseball cap, I slouched next to my mother in the waiting room at my doctor’s office. The strange tumors on my chest were getting larger and larger, and I could see the worry in Mom’s eyes as she squeezed my hand.

“Of course not, Jimmy.”

I looked nervously around the waiting room. Unlike most of the kids in my eighth grade class, I still had a little baby fat, and I was extremely self-conscious about my appearance. Some of the guys had already started to sprout hair on their bodies, but my skin was still soft and smooth.

Finally a nurse summoned us into an examination room, and Mom waited outside while I stripped down to my shorts. Doctor Gelardi, a middle-aged woman with a kindly smile, came in a few minutes later. She studied my chart before beginning her examination.

“Does that hurt?” the doctor asked as she pinched and squeezed my chest.

“No, it just feels funny.”

“All right, you can put your clothes back on,” the doctor finally said. Then she asked my mother to come with her, telling me to wait for them in the examination room.

When Mom finally came to get me, she had a funny look on her face. “I’m so relieved,” she said.

“You mean I’m not going to die?”

“Goodness, no! The doctor has definitely ruled out cancer.”

“Then what’s wrong with me?”

“We don’t know, honey.”

The two bumps had been steadily growing on my chest since the start of the school year. I first noticed them shortly after we moved into a small apartment when my father left us. At least I had my own bedroom, but I had to share a bathroom with Mom.

On the way home from the doctor’s office, Mom pulled the car into the parking lot of a large discount department store. “You wait here for a minute, Jimmy, I just have to pick up something.” It seemed like she was gone for a long time, and she put a shopping bag in the trunk without showing it to me.

“What did you get?” I asked her.

“The doctor suggested that you try wearing a...support undershirt to help with your...condition.”

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After we got home, Mom showed me what she bought. “The doctor said this brand has an extra degree of support and control.”

I recoiled as she held it against my chest. It was like a waist-length tank top, but the straps came together in back. I was stunned by the soft fabric and by how small it looked.

“It’s meant to fit tightly,” Mom said. She had removed all the hanging tags but the label in back said, “Two-way stretch 80% Polyester/20% lycra mesh. 34A.”

“Isn’t that a bra size? Is this a jogging bra?”

“If thinking of it as a bra make you uncomfortable, try thinking of it as a medical device. You need to give that flesh on your chest extra support until the bumps go away.”

I was shocked at what she was suggesting. Yet it might work...could it be “just what the doctor ordered?”

I eyed it warily. It was smooth, and completely free of hooks, clips and wires. The nude color matched my skin tone. I’d give it a try. Reluctantly, I took off my sweatshirt and struggled to get it on.

Once Mom showed me how to put it on properly, I realized that it held my chest in over an inch and eliminated the “points” which had been so embarrassing. It felt wonderful when I put my shirt back on and looked into the mirror.

Okay, I was wearing a bra, but I couldn’t stop staring at how flat my chest looked! I felt like a boy

again. Mom promised to buy several more so I could wear them all the time.

“Now, let’s celebrate with your favorite dinner! While I’m working on that, why don’t you take a nice, hot bath? I’ll come in and rub your bumps with some of that tea tree oil and lavender you like so much.”

Mom bought me two more support bras in slightly different styles. They were like tank tops with an extra criss-cross support strap in the back. After I got used to them, they were comfortable and the inner cup provided “soft support” holding me nice and snug. For the next several weeks, I almost forgot about the bumps on my chest.

Every night, Mom would massage them with tea tree oil and lavender lotion after I washed my hair. The lotion had the same nice scent as her soap and shampoo, which I’d started using when we began sharing a bathroom. I had dreams of becoming a rock star, and my hair was growing longer and longer. If Dad were still around, I’m sure he would have made me cut it off, but after he left us Mom told me I could let it grow as long as I wanted.

Because I wore the support bras all the time, I didn’t realize that the bumps on my chest were still growing.



I still had a little baby fat, and I was extremely self-conscious about my appearance.

One day, as I was about to get into the shower, I looked up in the mirror and my head jerked at the sight of my reflection. I stared and didn't say a word, didn't cross my arms in front of me, but I flinched and wanted to scream. The bathroom was cold and my nipples were erect. My breasts were small and firm, encircled by wide purple-brown aureoles that stood out pertly.

Despite the cold, a single clear bead of sweat slid down my face. "Omigod," I blurted. "They are bigger!"

I turned to the side. Without my bra, they quivered slightly as I shivered. When I sat down to breakfast, Mom could tell that something was wrong. "What is it, Jimmy?"

"I'm getting pretty big down there, Mom," I blushed. Later that day she made me another doctor's appointment.

Dr. Gelardi again examined me and again pronounced me, "healthy!"

"Aren't they getting bigger and starting to sag?" I questioned. "I've been wearing that...that..."

The doctor said, "It's a myth that breasts sag more without a bra! In fact, quite the opposite happens...it's due to the fact that the breast ligaments are not used to supporting the weight of your breasts. Have you been watching what you are eating?"

I nodded. "I hardly eat anything."

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“You seem to have gained several inches around your hips but not your waist.”

“Should I stop wearing those support things?” I asked hopefully.

“Swollen and sore breasts do not necessarily have anything to do with wearing a brassiere,” the doctor said. “We’ve done all the tests and can tell there is a hormonal imbalance but everything else says you are healthy. Many boys experience some swelling and tenderness in their breasts and we really shouldn’t mess too much with Mother Nature.” She took measurements and more blood.

Before I left, she said, “Your body now needs more support than it used to. Rather than flattening them, I recommend a few very good bras to wear, at least at night. You are a 34 B...we’ll try something that has an undercup support component and does not contort or distort your breasts. You need a bra that simply shapes and supports in a comfortable way. Listen to your body. Your breasts are trying to tell you that they are unhappy being pressed down all day.” I gaped at her in horror as all this sailed over my head. “Don’t worry,” she said, “I’ll talk to your mother in my office.”

Mom spent a long time with the doctor, and on the way home, we talked about it.

“Why me?” I moaned.

“Honey,” she said softly, “It’s nature’s way. You are healthy and you just have a bit more fat and tissue on your chest....”

“Like a girl,” I interrupted.

“Like over half the population,” she said. “You just need to do what the doctor says. Some women who throw their bras away find that they have increased breast pain. Give your breasts time to adjust to being in a bra. I’m sure one day you’ll wake up and the cups will be empty!”

But it got worse. At least 2 and sometimes 3 times a week, the slightest touch or brush was agony. I became moody and irritable. Mom massaged my chest every night with her lotion of tea tree oil and lavender, which seemed to provide temporary relief from my breast soreness, swelling and tenderness.

I about died when Mom came home one day with real brassieres for me to wear at night. I resisted at first, but after wearing one, my chest felt better, largely due to the fact that I felt less pressure around the chest area.

I gradually found them more comfortable than the elasticated tops I wore to school.

Due to my initial natural embarrassment, I occasionally went without a bra at night but after two days, the pain returned and was worse for a week even after I started wearing the bras. With the support, I had no problems except occasional sore nipples.



I occasionally went without a bra at night but after two days, the pain returned...

Of course I hid them as best I could from my friends. Fortunately it was the dead of winter, and everybody was bundled up in multiple layers of clothing.

Until one day in gym class. We were doing gymnastics, and most of the guys had stripped down to tee shirts. I figured that my tee shirt would cover my bra straps, but one of the guys must have noticed something funny. Before I could react, I felt my shirt and bra being pulled up behind my back, and my chest was exposed for all to see.

“Dude, you have tits!”

I tried to tug my shirt back down, but it was too late. All of the guys in the locker room were staring at my chest, and their laughter brought me to tears. I went home sick that day, and stayed home for the rest of the week, pretending to have the flu. When Monday finally came, Mom had to force me out the door.

I was like a zombie as I walked into my eighth grade homeroom. I heard a few snickers and catcalls, but fortunately our homeroom teacher was a former drill sergeant, and he had zero tolerance for bullying. Looking back, I suspect that Mom must have had a word with him about my problem, because he came down hard on my tormentors. Most of the guys ignored me after that, and I actually started hanging around with some of the girls during lunch and recess.

When I got home that afternoon, Mom was waiting for me.

“How come you’re not still at work?” I asked.

“I’ve made another appointment for you to see Doctor Gelardi. She asked me to let her know if your condition got any worse, and when I called her today and told her about your problems at school, she suggested that we come in for some more tests.”

“What kind of tests?”

“I don’t know, but she’s going to refer you to a specialist.”

I almost jumped out of my skin when the telephone finally rang. We’d been sitting around all afternoon, waiting for the specialist to call with the results of my tests. Mom picked up immediately and walked into the kitchen, gently sliding the pocket door behind her. I pressed my head against the thin wooden door and perked up my ears, desperately trying to glean what I could from her end of the conversation.

“Gynecomastia,” I heard her repeat several times, struggling with the pronunciation. “Are you sure? What shall I tell him?” A long pause, then “All right, doctor, but it’s going to be very difficult.”

I had no idea what gynecomastia was, but I was sure that I had just heard my death sentence. Suddenly Mom slid open the door, and I almost fell into the kitchen. “How much time do I have?” I asked bravely.

She took me in her arms and hugged me tight. “Don’t be silly,” she said.

“What did the doctor say?”

She led me into the living room sat me down on the sofa. “You have gynecomastia, which is a temporary condition. For some reason, and the doctors don’t know why, your mammary glands are abnormally large. For the vast majority of boys your age, breast development shrinks or disappears.”

“How long till they go away?”

“We don’t know. It could be tomorrow, or it could take a couple of years.”

“A couple of years?”

“I know this is very distressing, but we’re going to have to cope with it as best we can until the condition runs its course.”

“But Mom, I can’t show my face at school with breasts!”

“Well, P.E. is out, that’s for sure. Look, next week is midwinter break, and my sister has been bugging us to visit, so let’s you and me take a nice long vacation, okay? You can hang out with your cousins and the change will do us both some good!”

I hadn’t seen my cousins, Kathi and Kristi, in almost two years. They were fun girls, and we used to play a lot together when we were little. Both of them were total tomboys, and I figured they wouldn’t make a big deal about my problems. I slept most of the way as Mom drove to their place, a big house out in the country.

Times change! In the two years since I'd seen them, the countryside surrounding their house had been transformed into housing projects and shopping centers, and my cousins were all grown up. I was amazed to see two pretty teenaged girls coming down the driveway to greet us. I think Mom had tipped off my aunt and her husband about my condition, and they must have told Kathi and Kristi, because they pretended not to notice the bulges in my sweatshirt when we got out of the car.

It was so great being away from our cramped apartment, school, the nurses and doctors...my aunt and uncle's house was huge and I had my own bedroom with an adjoining bathroom, so I had plenty of privacy. I was able to hide my breasts pretty well with support bras and conceal them with baggy shirts, and I was beginning to feel almost normal by the end of the week.

Until the Saturday before we went home. My uncle left early that morning to go fishing (he asked me if I wanted to join him, but I was afraid the other men might make fun of me so I said no) and Mom and her sister decided to pamper themselves at a nearby day spa. That left me and my cousins alone in the house all day, and it wasn't long before one thing led to another.

"So Jimmy, how about let's hanging out at the mall today?" It was sunny and unseasonably warm out, and the girls must have been a little stir-crazy after entertaining their dorky cousin all week.

"How are you going to get there?"

"The new mall is only a mile and half from here, we can walk."

“You guys go, I’ll just stay here and play video games.”

“Oh come on, it’ll be fun! Besides, mother told us not to leave you alone, so you have to come with us. Do it for us, pleeeeeeease?”

So I gave in, and before long we were walking together to the mall. I had my usual sweatshirt and jeans on, with a pair of Vans sneakers, and my long brown hair was pulled back in a ponytail. It was almost like a spring day, and we took our time, stopping at a fast food place for lunch on the way. I had a cherry soda, and when I finished I saw Kathi and Kristi exchanging glances. “What?” I asked.

“Well,” Kristi giggled, “that cherry soda made your lips look red, almost like you’ve got lipstick on.”

“No way!” I said.

“And with your hair so long, you almost look like a girl!” Kathi chimed in. All of a sudden I wasn’t having fun anymore. I tried to wipe off my mouth with a napkin and my sleeve, but sure enough, my lips were stained a bright shade of pink.

“I think I want to go back to your place,” I said.

“Don’t be silly! Nobody here knows who you are, even if they do think you’re a girl, so what?”

So I trudged along after them, feeling awkward and self-conscious, just like I was back at home. My cousins must have sensed my discomfort, and finally Kristi

broke the ice. “Jimmy, I think it’s cool that you can make yourself look so like a girl.”

“Yeah,” Kathi said. “It’s like you’re some kind of secret agent or something.”

“I guess,” I said. When we got to the mall, the girls made a beeline for the GAP, and I tagged along like a third wheel while they pawed through the racks and tried on cute clothes. The same scene was repeated at Abercrombie and several other stores, and I was relieved that I blended into the crowd and didn’t attract any attention.

Until we went to the food court for some ice cream. We were waiting in line when three guys started approaching us. When Kathi saw them looking us over, she whispered something to Kristi, and then she whispered to me, “Jimmy, make pretend you’re a girl, okay?”

Before I could protest, the boys were on top of us, and Kathi and Kristi started flirting with them.

I stood there like a statue, my feet rooted to the ground, while the guys tried to impress us. “What school do you go to?” one of them said to me.

Kathi came to my rescue. “She’s our cousin from out of town, she’s just visiting,” she said.

“Cool, what grade are you in?”

“Eighth,” I squeaked. By then I had no choice but to play along and hope that the guys didn’t figure me out.

“Hey, wanna go to a movie?” one of them asked. An Adam Sandler flick was showing at the mall, my cousins said yes, and before I knew it I was sitting in a darkened theater between two guys! One of them was paired off with Kathi, and Kristi was beside them, which left me one-on-one with the third boy, whose name was Aaron. I was ready to slug him if he tried anything, but fortunately he was very shy, and before long the previews started and then we got into the movie. I almost forgot that I was on a “date” with a boy.

As soon as it was over, Kathi and Kristi dragged me into the ladies room. “This is so cool!” Kristi said.

“I’m not gay!” I hissed, making sure none of the other women in the restroom could hear me. What was I doing in a woman’s restroom, anyway? I could be arrested!

“Promise you’ll never, ever tell our mothers about this!” Kathi said.

“Don’t worry!”

The guys were waiting for us when we left the restroom. One of them was old enough to drive, and he offered to take us for a ride, but my cousins knew that would get them grounded for sure, so they gave the guys their phone number, and I told Aaron I was leaving for home the next day. What a relief when they finally went on their way!

Kathi and Kristi couldn’t stop laughing, all the way back to their house. “That was so great!” “I can’t believe Jimmy pulled it off!” “Jimmy, you are the coolest guy I

know!” We swore ourselves to secrecy, and by the time we got back, it already seemed like a fantastic dream.

Two months went by, and the bumps on my chest were bigger than ever. No longer just cone-shaped, they were round and jelly-like full. Even worse, my hips were continuing to widen, and there was no sign that my little package was ever planning to start puberty. By now I dreaded the trips to the doctor, but once again Mom made an appointment for me.

When a nurse summoned us into an examination room, Mom waited outside as usual while I stripped off my clothes and put on a paper gown. This time the specialist, Dr. Silver, let Mom join us for the examination, and she looked on as the doctor probed my chest. When the doctor started to poke around my cringing balls, I thought I was going to die of shame. “All right, you can put your clothes back on,” the doctor finally said. As before, he asked my mother to come with him, telling me to wait for them in the examination room.

I sat there on the examination table for what seemed an eternity. Finally Mom tapped on the door, and without a word she motioned for me to follow her, out through the waiting room, down the elevator and back to the car. She waited until we were alone in the front seat before she spoke.

“You have your whole life ahead of you, and it is going to be such a wonderful adventure!” she began. “I want you to know how much I love you, and how much

you can count on me to help you through this... passage.”

My head was spinning. “Mom, what did the doctor say?”

Mom took a tissue out of her purse and dabbed at her eyes. “You’ve got the body of a teenage girl.”

“What?”

“Dr. Silver told me he’s never seen any boy who’s developed the way you have...”

“But Mom, the doctors said my breasts would go away!”

“For most boys with gynecomastia, they do,” she said. “But you seem to chemically have the hormone levels of a girl.”

“No!” I sobbed. “It can’t be! What makes the doctors so sure?”

“Honey, do you remember last week when I was helping you with your science homework, and you asked me about a bell-shaped curve? It seems that gynecomastia affects some boys more than others. I’m afraid that, for whatever reason, your reaction was...extreme.”

“But I don’t want to look like a girl! I’d rather be dead!”

“Don’t ever say that again!” she shouted with an intensity that startled me. “I was so afraid that I was

going to lose you, when we thought your breasts might be tumors.”

My breasts...I buried my head in my hands and began to sob uncontrollably. “Let it all out, honey, let it all out,” Mom said over and over as she started the car and headed for home.

Nothing more was said about my condition for the rest of the day. The following morning, Mom was waiting for me when I sat down to breakfast. “I made an appointment to see your school nurse tomorrow,” she said.

“No way! Mom, you can’t be serious! There’s no way I want anybody at school knowing about this!”

“Dear, we have to face the facts. Your body is changing rapidly now, and no matter how baggy the clothes you wear, the kids are going to start noticing. In fact, I’m surprised they haven’t already.” I wondered if she knew that the snickers and snide remarks had already started at school.

Mom pressed ahead while I dug into my cereal. “I know it will be hard, but the sooner we get this behind us, the easier it will be for you. After all, next year you’ll be starting high school, and....”

I slammed my spoon down on the counter. “And what? Trying out for cheerleader? Mom, if I have to go through with this, can’t we move to another town where nobody knows who I am? Who I was?” I sobbed.

“I wish we could, honey. But you know how strapped we’ve been financially since your father left us...thank God I have a job with health insurance. If we were to move, I’d have to change jobs, and there’s no guarantee that I’d be able to get insurance to cover your....”

“My what? What are you planning to do to me?”

“Well, there’s not much we can do, really. Your breasts will continue to develop and your boy parts will get smaller and smaller. Eventually, the doctors say, you’ll probably want to have that taken care of, but there’s certainly no rush....”

“The doctors have said a lot of things...all wrong!” I cried as I ran into my room and slammed the door. I stayed there all morning, weeping over all that I had lost. I was a boy’s boy, and all I wanted was to play sports, ride my bike and hang out with my friends. What would they think of me now? As for girls, I had hardly even noticed them. How could I ever become one?

After Mom left for work, I decided I go for a bike ride. I rode and rode, my head full of thoughts and feelings, fears and questions. Everything I’d known was changing. I was like a foreigner in my own body. The doctors told me it was just a phase, a short nightmare in my life. But they were wrong, I was wearing a bra and my clothes didn’t fit right anymore.

There was no denying my outward identity. I could live in denial but strangers were seeing me as a girl. It was like I was in prison, and I had no choice but to deal with it. Mom was right. My body had been developing curves, and they were getting more and more obvious.

The “Miss”ings were coming on a more frequent basis, like at least once a week since I’d visited my cousins.

So if people couldn’t see who I really was, I would just hide the real me for a while. Why not let others see what they wanted to see...like I did at the mall with Kathi and Kristi. I was still a boy inside, right?

I was starving by the time Mom got home from work, later than usual. She greeted me as if nothing had happened, and as angry and upset as I was, I felt ashamed of what I’d said to her. “I’m sorry I said those things to you, Mom,” I stammered.

“Oh honey, everything’s going to be all right,” she whispered as she took me into her arms. I broke down again, sobbing uncontrollably while she stroked my long brown hair. “It’s just you and me against the world, and let’s promise that we never do anything to hurt each other, ever again. Promise?”

I nodded my head and she wiped away my tears. “I guess you’re right...I’ll give being a girl a try.”

“Really?” she said like she wasn’t real sure either.

“I thought you knew this would be better?”

“These are uncharted waters, honey, for both of us,” she said. “Let’s face it; you really can’t fit into boy clothes now. If we try this, it will require a lot of effort and commitment, but you will fit in so much better. After all, you’ll still be you! We’re only talking about how people see you.

“Let me fix us some dinner, and then we can have a nice long talk, okay?” I helped her set the table, and we listened to the evening news while she cooked one of my favorite meals. I tucked into it gratefully, and Mom waited until we were finished eating before broaching the subject that was on both of our minds. “Are you ready to talk about it some more?” she asked gently.

“I guess.”

“Being a girl isn’t the end of the world. I was one myself once, you know. And back then, we had it much harder. Today, girls can play professional sports, work at jobs only men used to do, even run for President.”

“I know, Mom. If we lived on a desert island, maybe I could handle being a girl, but how can I face my friends? Everyone will think I’m a sissy.”

“You can’t spend your life worrying about what other people think about you, honey. I know one thing: if you go through with this, it’s going to make you a stronger person.”

“Like I have any choice.”

“But you do have a choice about how you deal with this. You can mope around and be angry at the world, or you can embrace this new challenge and make the best of it.”

“Like how?”

“I bought you some things today, after work.”

“What kind of things?” I asked with dread.

“Things to wear.”

“You mean girls’ clothes?”

“Would you like to try them on?”

“No way!”

“Sooner or later, you’re going to have to try them. Come on, honey, let me help you. You might even enjoy it.”

My bedroom was little more than an alcove, with a twin-sized bed, a small dresser and nightstand, and a computer desk. When I saw what Mom had laid out for me to try on, I was actually relieved: khaki capris, a pink tee shirt and a matching canvas belt. At least it wasn’t a dress! The panties were another thing, but she’d asked me to try them on “just for size.” With a sigh, I stripped down to my bra and tugged on the cotton panties. Okay, so far no big deal...the tee shirt was just like one of mine, and the capris zipped in the front like guys’ pants.

It was only after I tucked in my shirt and put on the belt that I surveyed myself in the mirror, and to this day I can still recall my shock at what I saw. I wasn’t wearing anything overtly feminine, but with my perky tits pressing against my tight tee shirt, I definitely didn’t look like a guy! Mom came up from behind me, and when she pulled my hair back into a ponytail and fastened it with a pink scrunchie, I was all girl.

She asked me to put on my flip flops and join her in the bathroom. A little gloss on my protesting lips, a shell necklace, a pink Swatch...if I didn’t know better, I’d

have sworn I was cute. As if reading my mind, Mom said the words that I will never forget: "You are just adorable! Wait till we get you in a dress. The boys are going to go wild!"

Fortunately, it was late spring, and school would be out in a few weeks. I was back in my capris and tee shirt the next morning for the ride to school to meet with the nurse. Mom had insisted that I let the nurse see me like this, and I reluctantly went along when she agreed that I wouldn't have to go to any of my classes.

The administration building was in a trailer apart from the main campus, and nobody saw us as we hurried out of the car, up the short steps and into the lobby. Mom took charge and told the receptionist that we needed to see the nurse without delay, and we were shown into her office immediately. When she looked up from her desk, the nurse did a double-take before she regained her composure. Addressing my mother, she said, "When you called and told me what this was all about, I must say I found it hard to believe. After seeing your...son, I can believe everything you told me. How difficult this must be for you!" she said to me with genuine sympathy.

"It sucks. I hate it," I told her.

"I know. But you really are very lucky. Most of the boys in your class would never be able to pull this off. Please don't take this the wrong way, but you make a very pretty girl."

“That’s what I’ve told him,” Mom said. “We’re both having a lot of trouble coming to grips with this, but I’m convinced that the sooner he makes the transition, the better.”

“Well, we only have a few more weeks of classes...suppose we arrange for all of your teachers to let you finish the semester at home? You’ll miss the 8th grade graduation, of course, and the 8th grade dance....”

Anything to avoid that kind of public humiliation. “Can you do that?” I asked.

“I’m sure it can be arranged. After all, we do it all the time when a student has a communicable illness. I’ll even describe your...condition in some medical mumbo-jumbo that only a Latin scholar would understand.”

“Gynecomastia,” Mom told her, and she spelled it out as the nurse wrote it down.

“Very well. That will get us through this year. What are your thoughts about high school?”

“I’d like to ask for your help,” Mom said. “Although it will be very difficult, I think the only alternative will be to enroll him as a girl.” I hung my head in misery as she pressed on. “We’ll have all summer to get ready.”

“Under the circumstances, I agree completely. I have only one suggestion.”

“Yes?”

“From now on, let’s start referring to him as her. He is a she now.”

It was the summer I wished would never end. Long, lazy days spent alone in our apartment while Mom was off at work, feeling my body becoming more and more feminine. Every day I moisturized with a lotion with the same tea tree oils and lavender that were in my soap and shampoo. The peach fuzz on my face and legs disappeared, my skin seemed softer, and my long hair was streaked with blonde highlights from endless hours in the sun.

As crummy as our apartment was, it was in a complex with a great pool. After a bitter fight with Mom, she finally got me into a tankini, a two-piece swimsuit which hugged my emerging curves. Once I got used to it, I laid out every day at poolside. Fortunately, there weren't many kids my age in the complex, and I was able to spend the summer in near anonymity.

My friends from school must have wondered what had happened to me, and Mom fielded several calls from their parents. Her sad story of a protracted illness kept them at bay, and soon the calls tapered off as I receded into oblivion. By the end of July, I was long forgotten, and I doubt if any of my friends would have recognized me as the girl with the deep tan and golden hair.

One day I was sitting by myself in a chair by the side of the pool, reading a paperback, when a girl about my age came over and pulled up a chair beside me. "Anyone sitting here?" she asked.

Omigod. She thinks I'm a girl.

"No," I squeaked, my nose still buried in my book.



After a bitter fight with Mom, she finally got me into a tankini!

“My name’s Allison,” she said.

I drew a total blank. What was a girl’s name? “I’m Ji...Jenny,” I stammered.

“Nice to meet ya. Do you live here?”

“Uh, no, I’m just visiting.”

“Me too. It’s lame around here, dontcha think?”

“Yeah.”

“There’s no cute guys anywhere. At least none that I’ve met. Have you met any?”

“Nah.” I couldn’t believe that I was actually carrying on a conversation with a girl who thought I was a girl. Fortunately I had my sunglasses on, so I could look at her without staring. With I pang of remorse, I realized that she was cute. Really cute. She had a bikini on, and a baseball cap with her hair pulled back in a ponytail. I looked down at my girlish body, and sighed.

“I like your tankini,” she said.

“Huh?”

“Wheredya get it?”

I was dumbstruck. Maybe she thought I was stuck up, because she rolled over and started to work on her tan. I got up from my chair and fumbled into my flip-flops.

“Nice talking to you,” she said as I walked away. I closed my eyes and kept on going, trying to walk like a girl.

Almost every day, Mom brought home something new for me to add to my growing wardrobe. I spent most of that summer in shorts, sandals and tee shirts, grudgingly trying out a bit of fashion jewelry or makeup when Mom wore me down. With the exception of my daily stints at the pool, we never went anywhere, until one Saturday in early August when Mom finally lured me out to a nearby mall. “It’s time you learned how to make your way through the world in a skirt,” she said matter-of-factly after breakfast. It was pouring rain outside, so the pool was out, and when she bribed me with a new video game, I finally gave in.

It was cool and blustery, so I wore jeans and a sweater over my bra and panties. My hair fell casually past my shoulders, but I ignored Mom’s comment that I needed to have it styled soon. In many ways, we were closer now than ever before, although a new kind of mother-daughter tension was brewing just below the surface.

Our first stop was Best Buy for the video game. I lingered there as long as possible, pretending to be undecided about what I wanted. A good-looking guy in a blue vest came up to me and asked if I needed any help. Other than my mother, and the girl at the pool, it was my first human interaction since my visit with the nurse, and I must have seemed terribly shy. He was very nice, and I was relieved that he treated me like

there was nothing out of the ordinary. Mom watched with interest as he coaxed me out of my shell.

“Where do you go to school?”

“I’ll be a freshman at JFK this fall.” Did girls refer to themselves as freshmen?

“Cool, I’m a senior.”

According to his vest, his name was Bob. “Do you play any sports?”

“Football. We were supposed to start practice today, but coach called it off with all this rain. Guess we’ll have double sessions tomorrow.”

“What position do you play?”

“Wide receiver.” He was tall, and I noticed that his hands and feet were very large.

“Awesome,” I said, a little star-struck. “When’s your first game?”

“First Saturday in September. Hey, you should be a cheerleader. I think they’re having tryouts next week.”

“Sh’yea, right!” I blushed with embarrassment, suddenly very aware that he was taking me for a girl. “Gotta go.”

“Okay, see you around,” he said as I hurriedly picked up the video game I wanted and handed it to

Mom. After she paid for it, we ran through the rain back to the car.

“He was a nice young man,” Mom said on the way to the mall.

“He’s on the football team.”

“He seemed to like you.”

“Mom, I’m having a hard enough time with all this. I’ll never be interested in guys!”

“Well, you were never interested in girls, either,” she laughed. “Here’s a little secret: girls your age want to be with boys, and boys your age want to hang out with girls. It’s very natural.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. “How can I hang out with the guys, looking like this?”

“Just the way you are, with a little bit of work. As they get older, boys spend more and more of their time with girls. Do you think a hot-shot football player would have given you the time of day if you were a lowly freshman boy? You like to hang out with the guys and talk about sports. A girl like that is going to be very popular.”

“But I don’t want to be a girl! I want to be like him!”

“I know, honey, but you can’t anymore. So we’ll just have to make sure that boys like him find you irresistible,” she said as we pulled up to the mall. “Starting right now.”

Our first stop was the Juniors Department at Macys. We walked past rows of tops, pants and sweaters until we came to a rack crammed with skirts on sale. "You're a size 5," Mom said. "Do you see anything you like?"

"You've got to be kidding."

"This ought to look nice on you," Mom said. "Oh, and this one's darling." Soon her arms were full of hangers, and I followed her morosely towards the fitting rooms. "I'll wait for you out here," she said as she handed them over.

I found an open booth and shut the door behind me. My first skirt. I held the least girly of the bunch up to my waist. It was denim, and it fell a few inches above my knees. Mechanically, I removed it from its hanger, slid down the zipper, stepped into it, tugged it on and zipped it back up. That wasn't so bad, I said to myself. It was comfortable enough to walk in, although I felt a little vulnerable. I tried sitting down. A bit awkward, but no big deal. And I had to admit, it made my legs look great. My first skirt. There was no turning back now.

I tried on the rest of them. Some were so tight I could hardly walk around, and others were too loose. There was a tartan kilt that wrapped around my waist, and when I buttoned it, it fit and felt fine. I was about to put my jeans back on when I heard Mom outside the door. "How are we doing in there?" she asked.

"Okay, I guess."

"Did I get the size right?"

“Two of them fit all right.”

“Which ones?”

“The denim one and the one I’ve got on now.”

“Can I see?”

I opened the door and stood shyly in my kilt. “Oh, honey, it looks so adorable on you! Leave it on and we’ll find you some shoes that match.” Before I could protest, she scooped up my jeans and the denim skirt, so I fumbled into my flip flops and took off after her, as best I could in the unfamiliar skirt.

When I caught up with her, she was talking to a salesman in the shoe department. “My daughter needs some skimmer flats, in size 7,” she was saying. The salesman went off in search of them, and Mom sat me down. My knees were shaking under my skirt. “Calm down, honey. Here, put these on.” She fished some peds out of her purse. I cringed at the thought of putting nylon on my feet. “Don’t make a scene,” she whispered, and I reluctantly tugged them on. When I did, my kilt got all bunched up, and Mom deftly tugged it back down towards my knees. “There, that’s not so bad, is it?” she asked sympathetically.

“It’s kind of scratchy.”

“That’s why we wear slips sometimes. We’ll add that to our list.” Me and my big mouth!

The salesman returned with several shoeboxes. “Let’s try these on first,” he said, and I pressed my knees

together while the man slipped a pair of black flats on my feet.

“They hurt,” I said.

“I wasn’t sure whether you wore narrow or medium,” he said as he put them back into the shoebox. “These ought to fit better.” He took out another pair and slid them over the peds. They were also black, with little string bows, and they made my feet look tiny.

“Go ahead, walk around in them,” Mom said encouragingly. I stood up and took a few steps. They felt okay, although it was strange looking down at my legs, framed by a skirt and the dainty shoes. “We’ll take them,” Mom told the salesman. “Now, let’s show her some sandals.”

When the salesman was gone, Mom gave me a reassuring hug. “See, there’s nothing to it.”

“It’s weird, Mom. I feel like I’m naked down there.”

“I know. We’ll add some pantyhose and tights to our list.” When would I learn to keep my big mouth shut?

Two hours later, we were munching down McDonald’s burgers in the car. Mom had tried to talk me into going inside, but I insisted that we do the drive-thru instead. The back seat was crammed with shopping bags and shoeboxes: after Macy’s, we’d gone to Marshall’s, where Mom found a couple of purses on sale, and some tops to go with my skirts. “I wish I could

afford to buy you more, but we did very well today,” she said between bites.

For once in my life, I was glad we weren’t rich. “When am I supposed to wear this stuff?” I was back in my jeans, although I was wearing my new sandals, which were very comfortable.

“We have an appointment with a psychiatrist next Tuesday, and it’s important that he see you in something nice.”

“Omigod Mom, I’m not ready for this!”

“Summer’s almost over, and it’s time to start thinking seriously about high school. I’ve already spoken to your guidance counselor, who was very understanding. If the psychiatrist agrees, they are going to let you go as a girl.”

“But Mom, I’ll never get away with it. What about all my friends....”

“In the first place, your high school class will be much larger than your eighth grade class.” This was true: all of the intermediate schools in our district fed into one large regional high school, so there would be a lot of unfamiliar faces. “And in the second place, in case you haven’t noticed, you look a lot different than you did last spring. With a little makeup, and a new hairstyle, I don’t think anybody will recognize you.”

“What kind of hairstyle?”

“There’s a Supercuts right down the street. Let’s have some fun.”

After all I'd been through that day, there was no fight left in me. "Whatever," I said with a sigh.

I woke up on Tuesday morning to strange sensations. To get me used to wearing a skirt, Mom had suggested that I start sleeping in a satin nightgown she bought for me, and my earlobes still hurt from the piercing they got on the way home from the mall. There was a jewelry store next to the Supercuts, and I was so in shock from the way my new do made me look totally like a girl, I'd surrendered once again.

I pulled a matching robe over my nightgown and dragged myself into the kitchen, where Mom was putting the finishing touches on a gourmet breakfast. "I wanted to get our day off to the right start," she said as she ladled eggs scrambled with spinach and cheese onto my plate."

"Aren't you going to be late for work, Mom?"

"I'm taking the day off. Our appointment isn't till eleven, but I wanted to have plenty of time to help you get ready." She sat down beside me and poured herself a cup of steaming coffee. "This is a big day for you. Would you like a cup?"

Startled by her gesture, I said sure, and we sat there together, sipping the bitter brew. Finally she broke the silence. "It's important that you look and act like a young lady today."

I choked on my coffee. "That won't be too hard, after what you've done to me."

“That attitude is what I’m worried about. If the doctor thinks you’re being forced into this, you’ll probably have to go to school as a half-boy, half-girl...and I can’t bear the thought of what that would be like for you.”

“I thought you told me that nobody will know I used to be a guy.”

“That’s right, as long as the school goes along. We just have to convince the doctor that it’s in your best interest.”

“How do we do that?”

“By not acting smart, or making negative comments.”

So that was what this was all about. “Don’t worry, Mom, I’ll play along.”

“Good girl. Now, finish your breakfast and then I want you to take a nice long bubble bath. It will help get you in the right frame of mind.”

Suddenly I wasn’t hungry. I pushed back my plate, drained my coffee, and headed for the bathroom. “And don’t forget to wash your hair,” she said.

When I got out of the tub, Mom was waiting for me in my bedroom. Just like that first time, she’d laid my clothes out on the bed, and my heart sank at what I saw: my kilt, a matching sweater, a slip, pantyhose, panties and a bra. Welcome to my nightmare!

Once again, Mom's antennae were working overtime. "Let start with your hair," she said cheerfully. My robe wrapped tightly around me, I sat down on a corner of the bed and closed my eyes while she went to work with a blow dryer. "I love this look on you," she said when she was finished. "How about a little makeup?" I followed her into the bathroom, and stood there while she went to work with the cosmetics she'd gotten for me: a touch of foundation, a hint of eyeliner, and a smidge of lip gloss were all my young face needed to glow. Before I could protest, she gave me a soft spritz of expensive cologne. "Now, put on your bra and panties, and I'll be there in a minute to help you get dressed."

Unlike the cotton panties I'd been wearing all summer, these were silky, with a little rosebud on the waistband. The matching bra fastened in the back, and despite all my practice, I was having trouble with it when I felt Mom take the clasps and hook them tight. "Nervous?" she asked.

"Terrified."

"Sit down, and I'll show you how to put on your stockings," she said.

"Oh Mom, do I have to? You never see girls wearing them any more."

"In a few months, when it gets cold out, you'll be happy you have something on your legs." I watched with alarm as she took them out of their package and eased my left foot into the flimsy fabric. "Now, you try the other foot. Careful! There, that's it, now the other leg, attagirl...stand up and pull them up to your waist. Perfect! That wasn't so hard now, was it?"

I looked down at my silky legs with mixed emotions. I had to admit, they made me look very grown up, but I wondered how girls ever got used to them. I was still staring at my legs when Mom dropped the slip over my head. “Raise your arms, honey.” She fussed with the straps on my shoulders, then stepped back to admire her creation. “Oh honey, you look so sweet,” she said. “Come see for yourself.” I followed her to the full-length mirror in her bedroom, and my knees buckled at what I saw. Staring back at me was a gorgeous girl in silk and lace, with long blonde hair curling around her shoulders.

In a trance, I stood there staring at myself while she went to get my kilt, top and flats. It was almost like an out-of-body experience as I watched the girl in the mirror pull on her sweater, fasten her skirt and step into her shoes. I found myself turning this way and that to see how she looked from the side and from behind. Mom finally broke my reverie when she looped a thin gold necklace around my neck. “That looks pretty with your earrings. Now, let’s see if we can do something with your nails.”

Whatever remained of my boyhood vanished forever that morning, lost in a neverland of nylons and nail polish. I didn’t even argue when Mom presented me with a purse and helped me fill it with a wallet, makeup, brush and other female essentials. She had me practice walking from room to room in my skirt, coaching me on how to sit like a lady and carry my purse. The low point was learning how to pee sitting down while struggling with my panties, slip, skirt and pantyhose. By the time we had to leave for my appointment with the psychiatrist, Mom had me feeling like I’d been a girl all my life.

The drive to the doctor's office was traumatic. To try to put me at ease, Mom talked nonstop about nothing in particular. It was a beautiful day, and normally I'd have been riding my bike or playing baseball. Now, I could only stare at my shimmering legs as the sunlight reflected off my stockings. "We have to start thinking about your name," she said.

"My name?"

"Of course. If they let you go to school as a girl, you certainly can't use your old one! I've been thinking that you could use my maiden name as your last name. That way nobody will know who you really are."

"I guess." Her name before she got married was Wilson. "What about my first name?"

"Why don't you pick one, honey?"

I started thinking about the name I would be called for the rest of my life, as a woman. Suddenly I broke down and started to cry. I couldn't stop, and soon I was shaking with sobs. "I hate this, Mom! I don't want to be a girl. I just want my old life back. Please, can't I go back to being a boy? I don't care if the kids laugh at me. Please, don't make me do this!"

She pulled the car over to the side of the road and took me by the hands. "I'm so sorry about all this. Please, try to be brave! Remember when we first found what was happening to you, after we thought you were going to die? I was so scared I was going to lose you...."

Now she started to cry too. “If that ever happened, I don’t know how I could go on without you.”

The sight of Mom crying made me feel even worse. “I’m sorry, Mom,” I sniffled. “I know it’s not your fault.”

We both sat there sobbing, until finally she took a tissue out of my purse and dabbed our eyes. “Oh dear, our makeup will be a mess,” she said in a lighthearted voice. That started me crying again, and she bit her lip and waited until I calmed down. “I’m sorry, I was just trying to make a little joke. I know this isn’t funny, but we have to try to get through this somehow.”

I took my compact out of my purse and studied my reflection in the mirror. A pretty girl was looking back at me with the saddest eyes. I closed them and took a deep breath, acutely aware of my breasts pressing against my lingerie. This was my life now. “Mom, if being alive means I have to be your daughter, then I guess I can go through with it.”

She started crying again. “I promise I’ll make your life as wonderful as I can for you.”

There were no further hysterics on the way to the psychiatrist’s office. It was in an unfamiliar part of town, and Mom got lost a few times before we finally got there. The parking lot was jammed, and she had to cruise around and around before she finally found a spot.

I was a bundle of nervous energy, and I didn’t even wait for Mom to get out of the car. Scooping up my purse, I slung it over my shoulder and started walking

towards the entrance. She fell in beside me, and together we walked in silence up a long flight of marble steps. A summer breeze swirled my skirt around my knees, and I had to hold it down with one hand while I grasped onto the railing.

Two guys were ahead of us when we got into the lobby. A few years older than I was, they were talking about an NFL exhibition game the night before, sadly reminding me of a life gone forever. The elevator door opened, and I stood awkwardly for a moment before I realized that they were waiting for Mom and me to get on first. Mom pushed the button for our floor, and I looked up to see the guys staring at me, one at my legs and one at my boobs. They looked away when I stared back at them, and the ride passed in silence. The door opened, and once again they waited while Mom and I got out first.

The waiting room was crowded, and there weren't two chairs together. So I sat down next to an elderly woman, carefully smoothing my skirt beneath me as Mom looked on approvingly. "That's such a pretty skirt," the lady said. "I wish all young women dressed as nicely these days."

"Thanks," I stammered self-consciously.

"It must be wonderful to have such a lovely daughter," she said to Mom, who had taken the chair on the other side of her. "I had three boys," she went on.

"Yes, I'm very lucky," Mom said. I was dying inside when the receptionist called out my name. My boy's name. Mom and I sat frozen in our chairs, while the receptionist repeated my name again in a loud voice.

Mom finally saved the day by walking up to the receptionist and whispering something to her. Whatever she said, we were ushered into the inner sanctum without delay, although I could feel the eyes of everyone in the room boring into my back.

I was seated at a table and given what looked like a multiple-choice test. “Take as much time as you need,” a nurse said. I decided then and there to do whatever I had to do, and say whatever I had to say, in order to get this over with and get on with my life. Some of the questions were obvious: “Would you rather shoot a deer or read a poem?” “Would you rather hit a home run or hem a dress?” Others were harder to figure, but I answered them all the way I thought a girl would.

When I was finally done, the nurse took the exam and showed me into the psychiatrist’s office, where Mom was waiting for me. The shrink, a middle-aged man with thinning hair, got up from his desk and seated us on a small sofa, taking a facing chair. The sofa had very soft cushions, and I tugged desperately at my skirt when I sank down into it.

“Are you looking forward to high school?” the doctor asked as he flipped through my test results.

“Well, I’m a little nervous about it,” I said in a soft voice.

“I understand. Under the circumstances, anyone would be.” He put down my exam and scrutinized me like I was a bug under a microscope. “Are you sure you’re making the right decision?”

“There’s not much I can do about it, is there?” I crossed my legs and studied my nails to avoid his stare.

“Well, as a matter of fact there is.” Mom tried to say something but he cut her off. “There are three options for you. One, you can attend school as a young woman, assuming I’m satisfied that this would be in your best interest. Two, you can attend school without any determination as to your gender, although this would be difficult for you and confusing for your classmates. And third, we can aggressively counter your recent feminization with hormone therapy and you can try to resume your life as a boy.”

My heart jumped. Could it really be possible? I looked over at Mom, who had a stricken look on her face. “Can I really do that?” I asked.

“Well, I’m not sure how much you know about what’s been happening to your body....” The doctor gave Mom a searching look.

“Go ahead, doctor,” Mom said. “We’ve been through a lot together in over the past nine months. You can speak to her as an adult.”

“It’s like this,” the shrink said. “For whatever reason, your gynecomastia has advanced to the stage where, as far as hormones are concerned, your body is female. It is much like the results we see from chemical castration.” The words hit me like a kick in the stomach. “Medically speaking, your body is no longer capable of producing the levels of testosterone necessary for you to mature into a man.”

“So I’m stuck being a girl, right?”

“Not necessarily. Your condition is not unlike that of a woman who wishes to have sex change surgery to become a man. Only in your case, you still have a penis and testicles, although they have atrophied to the point where they are no longer functional.”

“What are you implying?” Mom asked.

“Simply this: if we were to begin an aggressive regime of hormone therapy, there is chance that we could induce the secondary sex characteristics of a male.”

“You mean like a beard and stuff?” I asked.

“That’s right. We would also schedule surgery to remove your breasts. Of course, you would never be able to function fully as a man...do you know what that means?”

“Like, I’ll never be able to get it up?” I looked over at Mom, who had smoke coming out of her ears.

“Doctor, this is outrageous!” she snapped.

“Well, you did tell me to speak to your...daughter as an adult.”

“That’s not what I’m talking about! Why don’t you tell her what’s really in store for her if she were to follow such a reckless recommendation?”

“I’m not recommending anything. I’m simply laying out the options. I have to do this, because if your son decides to become your daughter, the situation is much the same.”

“I can’t believe I’m hearing this,” Mom said. It was like watching a ping-pong match as they went at it, almost as though I wasn’t in the room. “Are you trying to destroy her life?”

“Of course not, but....”

“Look at her! She’s beautiful now. What kind of man could she ever hope to become? Do you really think that life would be better for her as a eunuch?” she spat out the words.

The doctor sat back in his chair and weighed his words carefully. “I have to ask these questions because the consequences are so enormous. To be quite specific, if he...if she is to become a young woman, hormones and surgery will be necessary. Normally, when we authorize such treatment, the circumstances are quite different, and the patient is much older. It’s almost unheard of to initiate hormone therapy at such a young age, but in a way you are very fortunate,” the doctor said, looking straight at me.

“Me, fortunate?”

“Yes. If you’d already started puberty, things would have been much more complicated. And I agree with your mother, at this point the transition from boy to girl will be much simpler than trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. If that’s what you really want.”

So it was all up to me. If I started on female hormones, I would become more and more of a woman. If I started taking testosterone, I’d have a shot at being...what? A wimp with a beard. They’d probably do

a mastectomy on me before school started. I looked down at my breasts, jutting proudly against my sweater. As much as I hated all that had happened, they were a part of me now, more so than the mocking memento between my legs.

I uncrossed my legs and rested my manicured fingers on my silky knees, feeling a strange kind of power as I realized that the doctor couldn't take his eyes off them. I was a pretty girl now, and I'd be a beautiful woman someday. Did I really want to go back?

I glanced at Mom, who was wringing her hands. "It's your decision," she said with a look of resignation. I thought back over all we'd been through, and to the question she'd asked me in the car that morning....

"Jenny."

"What did you say?"

"My name is Jenny Wilson," I heard myself say.

The doctor agreed that I was to start high school as a female. Now that the decision was behind me, I felt almost relieved, and Mom and I enjoyed a nice long lunch together as mother and daughter. My feet hurt from my tiny shoes, so I kicked them off under the table and tucked my legs under my skirt. It felt so good to rub my aching toes through my nylons!

Our waitress looked familiar, but I didn't recognize her until she mentioned my name. "Jenny?" she said.

Nobody knew me by that name...except the girl I met at the pool that day! It was her all right, cute as a bug in her waitress uniform, which was white with red stripes and an apron tied behind her back. What was her name?

“It’s me, Allison,” she said.”

“Oh yeah, hi! This is my Mom.”

“How do you do, Allison,” Mom said with curiosity. “Have you girls met?”

“Yeah, we met by the pool one day.”

“I thought you were just visiting,” I said.

“I was, my Dad was on a job interview and guess what: he got the job and we moved here last week!”

“Cool, what school will you go to?”

“JFK High, I’ll be a freshman.”

“So will Jenny,” Mom said proudly.

“I can’t wait till school starts so I can quit this job!” Allison said. “The tips are great, but can you believe they make me wear pantyhose with this stupid outfit? Every day I can’t wait to get home to put on cutoffs and a tee shirt!” A customer at another table signaled her, and she left us.

“She certainly was nice,” Mom said.

“Yeah,” I said. So real girls hated wearing dresses and pantyhose as much as I did!

As usual, Mom’s radar was in overdrive. “You have a lot to learn about being a girl,” she said matter-of-factly. “One of the little mysteries of being a woman is that as much as we’d hate it if we had to get gussied up all the time, if someone tried to take our pretty clothes away from us we’d revolt!”

“I don’t get it.”

“Jenny, you are a lovely girl.” I shook my head but she pressed on. “No, I really mean it. Everyone always said that you looked more like me than your father, and now that you’ve started dressing the part, I can see that you are going to be so much more happy and successful this way.”

“Give me a break, Mom!”

“Jenny, do you remember how stressful it was for you to try out for all the boys teams, always being one of the last ones picked?” Mom saw the hurt in my eyes, and she took my hand. “I’m not trying to be cruel, I just think you should face the facts. You would have struggled to make it as a man, but you will sail through life as a beautiful woman.”

Before I could respond, Allison came back to our table. “Hey Jenny, are you gonna join the Pep Club?” I gaped up at her. “It was too late for me to try out for cheerleader, but from what I hear they’re mostly divas anyway. The Pep Club is looking for freshman girls, and we get to wear the cutest outfits! Like real short skirts with letter sweaters and pom-poms, and matching

ribbons in our hair...here, I've got an extra application." She dug one out of her apron pocket. "It would be so cool if you joined, maybe we could hang out?" she said.

"That's a wonderful idea!" Mom said. "I'll make sure Jenny fills it out today."

After Allison left our check, Mom put on the full court press. "Isn't it great that you've already made a friend in your freshman class?"

"Oh Mom, I'm not sure I'm ready for this! Putting on a short skirt and waving pom-poms..."

"Being a girl is fun, Jenny! You are going to have such a wonderful time in high school, if you just let it happen." And I had to admit it to myself: now that I was committed, I was curious to find out what it was really like to be a girl. I was kinda getting used to the clothes, people seemed to think I was pretty, it was cool hanging out with kids like Kathi and Kristi, and maybe Allison and I could be friends. Now that my male ego was gone, it was becoming easier and easier to surrender....



ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIAL PRODUCTS!



So real girls hated wearing dresses and pantyhose as much as I did!

After lunch we went shopping, and Mom bought me my first pair of high heels, which made my legs look terrific. They didn't hurt too much, I was able to get around in them in no time, and it was awesome being three inches taller all of a sudden...I was staring down at my feet as I wore them out of the store, when I bumped – literally – into Bob, the football player! “Hey,” he said. “How ya doin’?”

In my heels, I was as tall as he was, and we just stood there, eye-to-eye, as I tried to think of something to say. “Okay,” I finally said. How original!

“Did ya try out for cheerleader?” he asked.

“Uh, no, but I may join the Pep Club.”

“All right! Those are the coolest girls in school, not all hung up on themselves and they really help out the team at dances and stuff.” Mom suddenly decided that she had to go back into the mall to look for something, and we stood there awkwardly as he seemed to be fumbling for words. “Um, there's a dance next Saturday in the gym after the game, would you like to go?”

Now I was the one who was tongue-tied! “I'll have to ask my Mom,” I said lamely.

“Sure, I understand. Hey, I don't even know your name! What's your number?”

We stood there talking for a long time, and I began to feel more and more comfortable with myself as a girl. I couldn't believe that a varsity football player wanted to hang out with me, but Bob seemed to really like me, and

I found it so easy to talk to him. I guess being a guy all those years gave me an edge over the other girls!

I gave him my number and told him to call me later, and he was waving goodbye when Mom returned from her mysterious errand. “He’s very nice,” Mom said.

“Oh Mom, he asked me out on a date Saturday night!”

If Mom was taken aback, she didn’t show it. “Where does he want to take you?”

“To a high school dance in the gym, on Saturday night.”

“That should be well supervised, and a lot of fun. I hope you said yes!”

“But Mom, I can’t go out on a date with another guy. It wouldn’t be right.”

Mom sighed. “When are you going to get it through that blonde head of yours that you’re a girl now, Jenny?”

“But I can’t go to the dance,” I said, grasping for straws. “I don’t have anything to wear.”

Mom took me by the arm and led me back into the mall. “Good thing yesterday was payday. Let’s find you a dress that goes with those heels.”

When we got back home two hours later, laden down with shopping bags, I noticed that the message light on our answering machine was blinking. I pressed

the play button, and the recording said, "This is Doctor Silver's office. Please call, it's urgent." Maybe they found a cure for my condition! Mom called the doctor's office immediately, and she had to wait quite a while for Dr. Silver to come to the phone. I studied her face for clues as she listened.

Suddenly her eyes widened, and she put her hand over the mouthpiece. "Honey, please go to the bathroom and bring me that shampoo we've been using." Wondering why, I ran down the hall to the bathroom as fast as I could in my heels, grabbed the shampoo bottle and raced back to the kitchen.

She scrutinized the label on the bottle and began reading the ingredients over the phone. When she got to "tea tree oils and lavender," I could hear an audible gasp from the doctor, and although I couldn't make out what he was saying, Mom's face sagged as she listened. "Are you sure?" she asked at length. She was blinking back tears when she finally hung up the phone.

"Mom, did you find out what's wrong with me?"

"How long have you been using my shampoo?"

"Ever since we moved in here. Why?"

"And my bath soap, have you been using that too?"

"Sure Mom, whatever's in the shower. What's going on?"

"And I've been rubbing your chest with my lotion all these months! Oh honey, I'm so sorry!"

“Sorry for what? Mom, what’s happening to me?”

She took a deep breath. “I don’t know how to explain this....”

“Mom, please tell me! What did the doctor say?”

“The doctor told me that the ingredients in my shampoo, soap and lotion are what turned you into a girl.”

Personal-Care Products Spur

Breast Development in Boys

Tea tree oils and lavender produce a condition called gynecomastia, study finds....

Personal-care products containing tea tree oils and lavender appear to cause abnormal breast development in pre-pubescent boys, a new study found. The ingredients, which have an estrogen-like effect, are found in various shampoos, lotions, soaps and other products.

“There’s definitely an association between exposure to lavender oil and tea tree oil and gynecomastia [abnormally large breasts in men],” said Dr. David Shelf, lead author of the research and doctor at Southern University of Northwest Montana.

Gynecomastia is associated with an imbalance of estrogens (so-called female hormones) and androgens (so-called male hormones). Young boys don’t produce much testosterone, so there is nothing in the body to counteract extra estrogen, such as might come from mistakenly taking a mother’s birth control pill or, more concerning, an estrogen-secreting tumor.

The condition is unusual. “I may see a patient every year or every other year with this, a pre-pubertal boy who has some breast development,” Shelf said. “Usually, it’s a tiny amount, and you never find out what it is, then it goes away,” he explained.

But suddenly Shelf saw five boys with the problem, he decided to investigate. All of the boys, he soon realized, had used over-the-counter health-care products containing lavender and/or tea tree oil on their hair or skin.

When tested on human breast cancer cells, the oils appeared to mimic the activity of estrogen and also suppressed male hormone responsiveness. After discontinuing use of the lavender and tea tree oils, all of the boys saw the problem resolved.

Mom and I read and re-read the article together that afternoon while we waited to see Dr. Silver. When we were finally shown into his office, he had a sheepish expression on his face. “Thank you for coming in so soon,” he said. I still had my heels on, which made me taller than he was, and I could tell that he was admiring my figure. “Have you had an opportunity to read that article?”

“Yes, several times,” Mom said.

“As soon as I saw it this morning, I knew it might be the answer.”

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“How can they put those products on the market, knowing what they do to young boys?” Mom asked indignantly.

“Nobody was aware of the cause and effect until that study was published,” the doctor said ruefully. “I called you as soon as I found out about it. I only wish I’d found out about it in time.”

“Doctor, it says that I’ll go back to being a boy as soon as I stop using that shampoo.”

“In the first place, it wasn’t just the shampoo. Your mother tells me that the soap you were using every day also has the same formula, and the lotion she was using to massage your breasts has a highly concentrated dose.”

“So I can’t just stop using them and go back to being a boy?” I asked without enthusiasm.

“Only relatively small samples of boys have been exposed to products with tea tree oils and lavender, and some of them have actually become quite feminine. But none of them have ever been exposed to it as much as you have. So it was bound to affect you more than the rest. I’m afraid it’s too late for you, Jimmy.”

“Jenny,” I said, dangling one of my heels from a stockinged foot.

“What?”

“My name is now Jenny Wilson.”

THE END of Part One.



JENNY WILSON AT HIGH SCHOOL

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Excerpt:

Aunt Ellie had a shopping routine and I guess I was along for the ride. "I need to go to Carol's. The poor woman owns a great shop but they have the street all dug up in front of her store, and her business is almost dead." As we made our way across a dug up road with construction workers yelling, she said, "See? No women want to come here with all that, but I try to buy some-thing every week to help her out."

When we walked into the very nice, large store it was empty. Carol, the owner ran up and greeted us. After introductions, Ellie went about looking for something to buy. When she checked out the dresses, she handed me her purse to hold. I took it timidly and with a red face.

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Billy's mother wasn't
about to miss
the mother-
daughter
lunch just
because...



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CONTEMPORARY
TV FICTION

Volume 71

“Lavender and Lace II”

by the author of The Jessica Project

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QUOTE BOARD

“Marriage should be between a man and
a woman... but men know little about
marriage because they were always men.”

“Lavender and Lace II”

My Name is Jenny Wilson

For those who missed Lavender and Lace I, Jimmy was a normal eighth-grade boy until he started using his mother’s personal care products laced with tea tree oil and lavender....a deadly mixture if you want to remain a boy! By the time the doctors found out why, Jimmy was Jenny.

I heard the doorbell ring as I was trying to zip up my new dress. I’d never done this before, and it was like trying to solve a Rubik’s Cube behind my back. Were all girls born contortionists?

“I’ll get it,” Mom said from the hallway.

“Okay, but please come here after you let him in. I need you!” I shouted. I reached over my shoulders again and tried desperately to grasp the zipper, finally falling back on my bed in frustration. I hate these clothes!

Mom tapped on my door and let herself in. “Bob looks so handsome!” she said. “What’s wrong, Jenny?”

“Oh Mom, I can’t get this stupid dress on.”

“Nervous?” she said as she hugged my shoulders and deftly zipped me up.

“Terrified.” I reached down and tried to put on my shoes. Try as I might, I couldn’t wedge my feet into them. “That’s it! Tell Bob I’ve come down with pneumonia!”

“Jenny, don’t panic! Every girl feels this way before her first date. The reason your heels don’t fit is that you don’t have any stockings on.” She walked over to my dresser and returned with a new package of sheer black pantyhose. “These will make your outfit.”

With a sigh of resignation, I eased on the delicate nylons and stood there while Mom fussed with my dress and slip. When she was satisfied, she led me into her bedroom and stood me in front of her full-length mirror. I could only stare at the beautiful girl with long blonde hair, her sexy legs shimmering beneath the wispy hem of her silky black dress. They felt funny, and they were a pain to put on, but if they made me look this good, I could learn to like these clothes!

Mom practically had to push me out of the bedroom, and I was shaking like a leaf in my little black dress as I made my way towards the living room. My first ever date, with a guy! Bob gave me a wolf whistle when I made my entrance. “Wow, you look great,” he said.

“Thanks,” I said shyly. “You look nice too.” And he did, in his jacket and tie. I had a moment’s sadness thinking about how I might have been a man like that someday...then we were out the door, with Mom calling after us to “Be home by eleven! Have a good time!”

I walked beside him, momentarily startled when he took my hand. I held his awkwardly as we made our

way down the path from our apartment to the parking lot. It was a soft summer evening, and scent of my cologne hung heavy in the gathering dusk. I was trying to think of something to say when I stumbled slightly in my unfamiliar heels, but Bob tightened his grip on my hand and almost lifted me off the ground. “Thank you, kind sir,” I stammered.

“Yes, milady,” Bob smiled as he released my hand and reached into his pocket for his keys. “Your chariot awaits,” he said, opening the passenger door of his parents’ Toyota. I held my breath and sat down as best I could in my short dress, while Bob enjoyed the leg show. Then he closed my door behind me and we were on our way.

Mom was waiting up for me when we got back home. “Did you have a good time?” she asked anxiously.

“Oh Mom, it was so cool! Bob introduced me to all his friends on the football team, and they were such great guys! I loved to listen to them talk about the team and the game today. They won, you know, and Bob scored a touchdown!”

“Did you dance with him?”

“Sure, there were a lot of fast dances. It was a little hard in these shoes,” I said, kicking off my heels and curling up beside her on the sofa.

“Were there any slow dances?”

“Yes Mom, we danced like that too. I just let him lead and held on for dear life.”

“I’m sure you did just fine, Jenny. Did he kiss you goodnight?”

“Mom!”

“I’m sorry Jenny, it’s really none of my business....”

I got up from the sofa. “I’m so ready for bed!” I kissed her on the cheek, picked my heels up off the floor, and retreated to my bedroom.

After I closed the door, I flung myself down on the bed like a rag doll and stared up at the ceiling. If there were any doubts in my mind, they had been swept away by the tide of emotions I experienced that night. There was nothing wrong with going to the dance with Bob. How could there be? After all, he treated me like a girl. I was a girl.

It seemed so strange when Bob took me in his arms and guided me around the dance floor! I pulled away from him at first, but when he nudged the back of my dress and pressed our bodies together, I just went with it, and it felt almost natural. I nearly freaked out when he put his hand on my knee while he was driving me home, and for the first time in my life I was glad I had pantyhose on...I shuddered when I thought of what Bob might have discovered if I’d allowed his hand to roam. In truth, when Bob finally kissed me on the front doorstep, I was ready for him. I’d never been kissed like that before, by boy or girl, and it blew my mind.

I closed my eyes and lay back on my bed for a long time, relishing my memories and the sensations of silk and lace against my tingling skin. I finally broke the spell when I got up off the bed and started wrestling with the zipper on my dress. It came off easier than it went on, and I actually hung it up in my closet so it wouldn't be wrinkled next time I wore it. As I went through the motions of peeling off my slip and nylons, I realized that I was destined to a lifetime like this, doing all the little things that only a woman understands. I decided that night to stop resisting, let myself go and try to enjoy the ride.



JENNY WILSON AT HIGH SCHOOL

Our lawsuit against the manufacturer of tea tree oil and lavender products was settled quickly and quietly. The last thing they needed was a media circus featuring a boy who had been turned into a girl by using his mother's soap, shampoo and body lotion! Our lawyer considered throwing my doctors into the lawsuit, but their cooperation paid off and we scored millions of dollars, tax free. The money was small consolation for what they'd done to me, but it did enable us to move out of our crummy apartment and settle into a new home close to my high school. A developer was just closing out a swanky new subdivision, and Mom bought a furnished model so we could move in immediately.

I was excited until I saw my room, which the interior decorators had turned into a parody of teenage girlhood. Everything was pink, poufy and precious! The movers were able to relocate our meager possessions in a few hours, and I watched glumly as my dresser and closets were filled with dresses, skirts and lingerie. I might be a girl, but I was a tomboy at heart. Only a girly girl would dig a room like this.

All my old boy clothes had been packed up in boxes, and Mom was going to take them to Goodwill, but the move was so hectic that she didn't have time. So they wound up in a spare bedroom along with a lot of other miscellaneous junk. Mom took to her bed after the movers finally left, and I tiptoed into the spare room and began sifting through the remnants of my lost boyhood, with mixed emotions. I was committed now to becoming a girl, but it was so hard to let go! I started to cry when I found my old Little League uniform and Pop Warner football jersey, never to be worn again....

My thoughts wandered back to my fateful meeting with the psychiatrist, who had offered me a way out: if I wanted to go back, I could have my breasts cut off and start mainlining testosterone, which might bulk me up enough to pass as a guy again. Could it really be possible? With grim determination, I started to paw through the boxes, looking for something to wear. Soon I had replaced my bra, panties and sundress with a pair of boxers, one of my old baggy sweatshirts, and my favorite jeans. Only the jeans didn't fit anymore! I could hardly get them up over my girlish butt, and once I did they were way too big in the waist! I tugged them on anyway, surprised by how scratchy and uncomfortable they felt against the smooth skin on my legs, and I found an old belt that managed to hold them up. I put on sox and some old sneakers, pulled my long blonde hair into a ponytail tied low like a guy's with long hair, took my wallet out of my purse, and tiptoed down the stairs.

There was no mirror in the spare room, so I had no idea what I looked like as I stole into the garage and found my old bicycle. While I was putting on my helmet my hand brushed against my earrings! Off they came, and soon I was pedaling like mad through the unfamiliar streets of our new neighborhood, not sure where I was going or why. I was a boy again!

I must have ridden several miles when I came upon a strip mall. By now I was dying of thirst, so I pulled up to a convenience store and went inside to buy a soda. When I got to the counter, the cashier said, "May I help you, miss?" I left my soda on the counter and ran back outside to my bike, tears streaming down my cheeks.

So there was no escaping it! I was past the point of no return, doomed to spend the rest of my life as a girl.

To make matters worse, I got lost trying to find our street, and I rode aimlessly until it was almost dark. I only located our new house when I saw Mom standing in the driveway, waving frantically at me. I pulled into the driveway, tumbled off my bike and fell into her arms, sobbing uncontrollably.

“Jenny, I was so worried about you! Where were you?”

“Oh Mom, I thought I could go back to being a boy again, but it’s too late!”

She hugged me and led me into the house. “Is that why you’re dressed up in those old clothes?”

“Yeah,” I sniffed. “I thought I could go back to being a boy, but I look so like a girl that even total strangers don’t believe I’m a boy anymore.”

We sat down on the sofa and she took me into her arms. “Jenny, I thought you were starting to like being a girl.”

“I was Mom, but when I saw my old clothes I just wanted to be a boy again, only now I can’t anymore.”

Mom lifted off my bike helmet, untied my ponytail and stroked my long blonde hair. “Have you ever heard the expression, you always want what you can’t have?”

“I guess.”

“It’s not unnatural for you to feel the way you do, Jenny. But let me ask you a question. If you could never wear a dress again, would you miss it?”

“No way!”

“Not even a little bit?”

I thought back to the way I felt after the dance.
“Well, maybe a little....”

“Or if I told you that you could never see Bob again, wouldn’t you miss him?”

“Sure, but I could still see him, as a guy I mean.”

“Jenny, Bob doesn’t think of you as a guy. He thinks of you as a girl, a very pretty girl who he asked out on a date. I wouldn’t be surprised if he asks you out again someday. Would you really want to give that up?”

I closed my eyes and remembered the way it felt to have Bob’s arms around me again, pressing our bodies close together as we danced, like we were the only two people in the world. “No.”

“No, you don’t want to be a girl anymore?”

“No, I don’t want to give it up.”

The Monday after we moved in was the first day of high school for Jenny Wilson. I was as nervous as a kitten all day Sunday, although it helped a lot when Bob called, just to talk! I took the cordless phone out by the pool in our beautifully landscaped back yard, stretched out under an umbrella and hung on every word while he did most of the talking. I quickly learned that most guys

like to talk about themselves, and all I had to do was prime him with questions about football, school and rock groups to sound like quite the conversationalist. Bob knew most of my teachers, and he gave me little tips on how to get on their good sides. It was fun having a senior to hang with, almost like having a big brother, only way better...he didn't ask me out again, but I could tell that he liked me and I hoped that he wouldn't wait too long. That was one downside to being the girl, although at least I'd never have risk getting shot down in flames by asking somebody out!

On Sunday night, Mom sat me down for a little talk after dinner. "I want you to know how proud I am of the way you've handled yourself this summer," she said.

"It's not like I had any choice, Mom."

"But you did, and you chose to make the most of your...situation. I have to admit, I was very worried about you for a while, but you have emerged as a beautiful young woman who is going to spread her wings in high school!"

"If I don't get found out."

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Jenny. I've confirmed with the principal's office that you will be excused from physical education classes, and as long as you're careful in the girls' room, you shouldn't have anything to worry about."

"I guess, but I still feel creepy about it."

"That's only natural. I also spoke with Dr. Silver."



I stuck out my tongue and trudged up the stairs to my princess suite to get myself dressed.

I knew what that meant, and I wasn't sure I was ready for it. It was one thing to stand by helplessly while my body slowly became more and more feminine. It was another thing to have an operation down there. What if I changed my mind?

“You have an appointment after school tomorrow,” Mom continued.

“Please Mom, I'm under enough pressure tomorrow. Can't we wait a while?”

“I don't think so, honey.”

It took me a long time to fall asleep that night, and the next morning I was feeling a little groggy when I came down to breakfast. Mom was loving her new gourmet kitchen, and her French toast would have been wonderful if I'd had any appetite. “Eat!” she scolded me as I played with my food. “You're going to need your energy in class today.” I stuck out my tongue and trudged up the stairs to my princess suite to get myself dressed.

It was going to be an unseasonably hot day, and for once I had it better being a girl. My pink tee shirt and denim skirt would be nice and cool with my sandals. The poor guys would have to wear long pants, sox and shoes! I stepped into the shower and lathered up with tea tree oil and lavender, letting it soak into my body while I shampooed my long blonde hair with the same formula. It was doing wonders for my soft, smooth skin, even if combined with the hormones I was now taking, it had proven deadly for what remained between my legs.

I looked down at my old self and sighed, although my sorrow was soothed by the sensation of soaping up my firm young breasts.

I rinsed myself off, patted down with a plush new towel, and wrapped another one around my head like a turban. Mom had taught me a lot over the summer, all the little tricks that women use get themselves ready...it just took so much time! I gentle reminder from Mom over the intercom informed me that if I didn't get moving, I'd be late my first day of school.

It took forever to blow dry my hair, and I had to take a few more minutes to put on eyeliner and lip gloss – funny how it made my face look so different – then it was back to my bedroom to put on my bra and panties, tug on my shirt, step into my short skirt and strap on my sandals. Instead of a purse, I stuffed my wallet, comb and other girl stuff into a cute little backpack, then a long look at myself in the mirror, and I was skipping down the stairs.

Although it was a ten-minute walk to JFK High, Mom was waiting with the car revved up in the driveway. “Better let me drive, Jenny, you don't want to be late!” I jumped in beside her, no big deal in a skirt anymore, and sat back as she zoomed down the street. “Are you nervous?” she asked nervously.

“Nah. I figure, if I get outed by one of the kids from eighth grade, we have enough money now to send me to a Swiss boarding school.”

“That's not funny!”

“Chill out, Mom. Hey, I think you’re more scared than I am.”

“Do you have your new cell phone?”

“Sure, it’s in my backpack.”

“Just call me if you get in trouble, and I’ll rush right over.” She pulled up alongside the entrance to JFK High and gave me a tearful look. “Good luck today, Jenny. I’m so proud of you!”

“Thanks, Mom. Gotta go!” The last thing I needed on my first day of high school was for all the kids to see my mother treating me like a big baby! I hopped out of the car, slung my backpack over my shoulders and headed for my homeroom, just like all the other girls.

So I found my locker, had a quick peek at myself in the girls’ room (definitely not a boy looking back at me in the mirror!) and took a seat near the back of my homeroom. I quick glance around the room turned up only four familiar faces from my old grammar school, and the way I looked now, there was zero chance that any of them would recognize me as Jimmy, the geeky guy with boyboobs who missed the last month of eighth grade because of an undisclosed medical condition.

Our homeroom teacher was Mr. Collins. Bob had given me the lowdown on him: a history teacher, drama coach and all-around nice guy. As my home-room teacher, he was the only one outside the nurses and principal’s office who knew my secret, and he didn’t let on that there was anything special about me. We had a

few minutes before the bell for our first class, and after laying down a few ground rules, Mr. Collins went around the room and asked each of us to introduce ourselves. When he got to me I chirped, "My name is Jenny Wilson." I heard a couple of low whistles from some of the guys, which I pretended to ignore, then the bell rang and we scattered for first period.

The whole day was a blur, even more so for me, trying to pay attention in class while little things constantly reminded me of how crazy my life had become. In English, when we were asked to write a paragraph describing what we did that summer, I toyed with putting down something like this: "It was a typical summer for me. I grew breasts, put on a woman's swimsuit and laid out by the pool most of the time. Got my ears pierced and learned how to put on nylons. Bet not many guys can beat that!" Of course I didn't do it, and it seemed strange to watch my manicured fingers clutching a pencil as I tried to write in a girlish hand.

At lunchtime, I was standing in a long line at the cafeteria when I heard a familiar voice behind me. "Hey Jenny!" I turned around apprehensively, and was relieved to come face to face with Allison, the girl who had befriended me by the pool one day.

"Hey Allison."

"Did ya sign up for Pep Club yet?" she asked as she fell in beside me.

"Uh, no...but I still have the application. Is it too late?"

“Nah, they’re still looking for girls. How’s it going for you today?”

“Okay, I guess.” We picked up our trays and started to move through the serving line. “I miss summer.”

“Me too, but my classes so far are pretty cool. Have ya met any cute guys?”

“Yeah,” I said matter-of-factly. “I went to the dance last week with Bob Thornton.”

Allison’s eyes bugged out. “THE Bob Thornton? As in Bob Thornton the football star and President of the Senior Class?”

“Yep.”

“How’d ya meet him?”

“He picked me up at the mall.”

“Whoa, I gotta start hanging with you, girl. Did ya meet any of his friends?”

“Sure, they’re all cool guys.”

“Well, can you introduce me?” We filled our trays and I followed Allison to an empty table.

“Sure. Bob told me the Pep Club is the best,” I said as I fished the application form out of my backpack. I had a moment’s hesitation before I remembered to write down “Jenny Wilson” instead of my real name, and after I filled it out I gave it to Allison.

“I’m so blown away by the fact that you went out on a date with a senior guy.” As if on cue, I heard another familiar voice behind me. “Hey Jen. Mind if we join you?” Allison’s eyes bugged out again as Bob and Randy, one of his friends from the football team, pulled back the chairs next to ours and sat down beside us. “Who’s your friend?” Randy asked.

“I’m Allison,” she said, beating me to the punch. Allison was a flirt, and it wasn’t long before she and Randy were bantering back and forth, which was fine with me and Bob.

“How are your classes so far?” he asked.

“Okay. Hey, you didn’t tell me you were President of the Senior Class!”

“I thought everybody knew,” he laughed. “Seriously, that’s what I like about you, Jenny. You’re not like any other girl I’ve ever gone out with.”

Buddy, if you only knew, I thought ruefully....

“Are you going to the game this weekend?”

“I’m gonna join the Pep Club, if they let me in.”

“Trust me, you’re in. The President of the Senior Class will have a word with the President of the Pep Club,” he said with mock pomposity. I heard myself giggling, a real girly giggle, and I felt butterflies in my stomach when he asked, “Would you like to do something after the game?”

“Yes!” I practically shouted. That got Randy and Allison’s attention, and Bob said, “Hey, why don’t you guys join us?”

Although my backpack was stuffed with books and school supplies, I was walking on air all the way home. I had a date on Saturday night! So what if it was a double date – Allison was a lot of fun, and it would be a blast to hang with Bob and Randy.

Mom was waiting for me in the living room when I got home. “How was it?” she asked apprehensively.

“Okay,” I said as I shed my backpack. I gave Mom a big hug. “Thanks, Mom,” I said.

“Thanks for what, honey?”

“For pushing me to do this.”

“You mean going to school as a girl?”

“Uh huh.”

“I worried about you all day! I’m so glad things went well for you. Do you like your teachers?”

“They’re okay.”

“Did you make any friends?”

“Well, Allison and I had lunch together and....”

“Allison! Isn’t she the girl we met at the restaurant?”

“That’s her. She signed me up for the Pep Club. Our first meeting is tomorrow after school, so I’ll be home a little later, okay?”

“Of course! That sounds wonderful.”

“Oh, and I have a date with Bob on Saturday night,” I said as I started up the stairs towards my room.

“Oh my,” Mom said. “Good thing we have that appointment with Dr. Silver.”

The drive to the doctor’s office brought back a lot of bad memories. There were the endless visits the previous year, as my breasts grew larger and larger, to the consternation of the doctors and nurses. When they finally diagnosed my condition as gynecomastia, I was pretty far gone, and by the time they discovered the cause, it was much too late to save my manhood. By then I had taken on the outward appearance of a girl, and after a shrink recommended that I attend school as a female under an assumed name, I started on a regime of female hormones.

Dr. Silver, my specialist, was the one who finally discovered that Mom’s shampoo, soap and lotion were laced with tea tree oil and lavender, which turned me into a girl. He greeted me warmly after a nurse took some blood and urine, and his physical examination was very thorough. He lingered over my breasts before he turned his attention to my pitifully tiny privates, which seemed to shrink more and more every day.

After I put my skirt and top back on, Mom and I joined him in his office. “Your health is excellent, Jenny,” he began. “Your hormone levels are perfectly normal for a girl your age, although there is a slightly elevated level of testosterone in your blood.”

“Isn’t that to be expected?” Mom asked.

“Yes, which means that although Jenny’s testicles have atrophied considerably, there is still some residual activity going on. It will never be enough to trigger male puberty, but it could hamper her development into a woman somewhat.”

“Can you do anything to help her?”

“Yes,” he said, looking directly at me. “Jenny, it’s too soon for us to consider sexual reassignment surgery for you. Medical protocols require us to wait a little longer for that. But we can make sure that your testicles don’t interfere with your development into a woman, by removing them. This is a relatively simple out-patient surgery called a bilateral orchidectomy, which can be performed right here.”

I swallowed hard and looked at Mom. Once my balls were gone, there would be no turning back...but who was I kidding? I crossed my smooth legs and felt my breasts pressing against my bra. I felt like I was a girl already, and the sooner I put my past behind me, the better my chances for a normal, happy life. “How soon can you do it?” I asked.

“We can do it today,” Dr. Silver said.

I was shaking all over while the nurse prepped me, but the doctor used a local anesthesia. After I was numb, he made a small incision in my scrotum, pushed my balls through the opening, and out they came. Two little snips, and I was no longer a male. “Don’t worry, you’ll still be able to wear a bikini,” he said as he stitched me up, as if this was supposed to make me feel better. When I was able to sit up, all I saw was an empty sac with a bandage on it. Other than a dull ache from where my balls used to be, there was no pain, only a profound feeling of loss and sadness. The doctor prescribed a special panty liner to keep my stitches from oozing all over my clothes. I went to bed as soon as I got home, and cried myself to sleep.

I felt almost normal the next morning, a little stiff and sore but there was no pain to speak of. I was famished after going to bed without supper, and I was grateful for the big breakfast that Mom had waiting for me. “How are you feeling, Jenny?” she asked.

“Much better,” I sniffed. My emotions were still a mess, and I almost started crying again.

“Do you want to stay home from school today?”

“I can’t do that, Mom. I have Pep Club,” I bawled.

Mom put her arms around me. “Jenny, I know this is so hard! But what you did yesterday was the right thing.”

“I know, Mom. It’s just that until yesterday, none of this seemed permanent. Now I know that I’ll never be able to go back.”

“Think about the future, Jenny. There’s no point in living in the past.”

She was right, and I knew it, but it didn’t make me feel any better. I managed to finish most of my breakfast, and then it was back upstairs to get ready for school. There would be no shower today – I had to keep my stitches dry – and the nurse recommended that I wear loose-fitting clothing, so after I changed my panties and panty liner, I put on a bra, camisole, and cotton jumper that would be cool and comfortable with my sandals.

Mom drove me to school again, and she said she’d pick me up after Pep Club. “Remember, no physical activity today,” she said. “If anyone asks you why you’re not yourself today, just tell them that you’re having cramps. They’ll assume it’s that time of the month.” That sent me into another tailspin, and I burst into tears again. Not only could I never go back to being a boy, I had to pretend I was a girl having her period! Mom drove around the block a few times until I cried myself out

I skipped lunch so I wouldn’t run into Bob or Allison, and made it through the day without any more hysterics. By the time I went to the gym for Pep Club orientation, I was feeling almost normal, if anything about my life could be described as normal these days.

The gym was filling up by the time I got there, and I was glad to take a seat in one of the upper rows and get lost in the crowd. The band was playing fight songs, then the cheerleaders came in and did their thing, and then the Pep Club advisor, a very mannish P.E. teacher named Mrs. Clark, came to the microphone. She told us that the Pep Club's mission was to promote school spirit, then she turned the microphone over to the Pep Club President, who described the events that the Pep Club organized every year, like Homecoming and Winterfest. She said that the number one responsibility of the Pep Club was to encourage support for all the school's athletic teams, and just then the band played a drumroll and Bob ran out onto the floor in his football uniform!

In spite of all that I'd been through, I felt a little twitch in my panties at the sight of him. He looked so big, strong and handsome! Bob took the microphone and told us how important it was to the team to hear the kids cheering them on from the stands, and said that if we all got behind them they could go all the way to the state championships that year! After he left for football practice, the cheerleaders did another routine, the band played another fight song, Mrs. Clark handed out copies of the Pep Club Constitution, we all stood and raised our hands to take the Pep Club Pledge, and then we got in line to pick up our uniforms.

Of course Allison found me in the crowd. "Where you been all day?" she asked, flipping through the Constitution. "This is so lame: 'Hair and make-up must be in good taste, which is at the discretion of the Pep Club advisor' – have you seen Mrs. Clark? 'Jewelry is not allowed at games, practices, or performances. This includes earrings, watches, necklaces, rings, bracelets, and any piercings.' Dang, there go my plans for a nose

ring! ‘Members will receive one demerit for each of the following: chewing gum at Pep activities, negative attitude or inappropriate behavior.’ Uh oh!” She took her gum out of her mouth and stuck it on the back of her Constitution. I thought I was going to pop my stitches, I was laughing so hard. Allison almost made my blues go away, it was so much fun being girlfriends.

We finally got to the head of the line, where two senior girls measured us for our uniforms. I couldn’t believe how skimpy the little skirt was! Soon my arms were full: an addition to my skirt and matching panties, there was a sleeveless top, letter sweater, little anklets and hair ribbons, all in our school colors. I stuffed everything into my backpack, and called Mom on my cell phone to tell her to pick me up. By the time we got home, I was feeling pretty good about being a girl again.

The rest of the week flew by, and on Saturday I slept until almost noon. Mom finally had to wake me up to get ready for the game! My stitches were healed by then, and I took a nice long bubble bath after breakfast. Mom pointed out the peach fuzz on my legs and suggested that it might be time to start shaving them, so I took one of her disposable razors and experienced another right of passage into the world of femininity. After I shaved my legs, I shampooed my hair and lay back in the tub, my breasts peeking up through the bubbles. It was getting harder and harder to remember my life as a boy.

Putting on my Pep Club uniform for the first time was enough to make me forget that I’d ever been Jimmy. It was a good thing they gave us matching panties, because the little pleated skirt barely covered my behind! We were still having a heat wave, and Mrs.

Clark told us to wear our sleeveless tops instead of our sweaters. I put on my little sox with white sneakers and called down for Mom to help me with my hair. She sat me down on the bed and separated my long blonde hair into twin braids, fastening each with one of the gaily colored ribbons. "Oh Jenny, you look so precious!" she said when she was done.

I heard a horn blasting outside and realized that Allison was waiting in the driveway. Her Mom had offered to pick me up on the way to the game, which was at a rival high school. Mom helped organize some essentials in a little purse while I put on some lip-gloss and eyeliner, and I was off to the game. Two other members of the Pep Club rode along with us, and for the first time in my life I was just one of the girls, gossiping and giggling in our cute little outfits.

The game was awesome! Even though we were away, a special place was staked out on the visitors' side for the Pep Club, so we had great seats. The band played great, the cheerleaders were over the top, and we yelled for all we were worth as our team rolled up the score. Basking in the sun in my sleeveless top and skimpy skirt, watching the guys down on the field panting with exertion and getting their heads bashed, I finally got it: girls really do have it better than guys. The Pep Club did its first dance routine out on the field at halftime, something simple since we'd only been practicing for a few days, and as I waved my pom-poms and sang a school song along with the other girls, I looked up in the stands to see some of my old eighth grade friends, now dweeby freshmen on the bottom of the totem pole. If they only knew I was hanging out with the star of the team that night!

It was the first time I'd ever seen Bob play football, and he was fantastic, catching two long passes for touchdowns and even recovering a fumble in the end zone for another one. When the gun finally sounded to put the home team out of its misery, JFK High was on top by a score of 42-6, and all alone in first place. We raced out onto the field after the game, and when Allison found Randy he gave her a big kiss. I was standing there awkwardly when I was suddenly lifted off the ground, and then Bob was holding me in his arms and kissing me too. It was the most wonderful moment of my life.

Mom gave me a disapproving frown when I came downstairs that evening in tight jeans and a low-cut blouse. "I'm not sure I want you going out on a date looking like that."

"Oh Mom, I already talked to Allison and this is what she's wearing, and her Mom was in the car and it wasn't any big deal to her! Besides, you should see what some of the other girls are wearing out there. I look like a nun compared to them."

"They're not my daughter."

"Listen Mom, until I get myself fixed down there, jeans are much safer than a skirt." That totally threw her, and she was still trying to think of a response when the doorbell rang. "Bye!" I said as I scooted out the door.

"You're in a hurry," Bob said.

“Mom thinks I should change into something more ladylike.”

“Well, maybe you should,” he laughed.

“Huh?”

“Not tonight, for sure, but I have to admit I do like seeing you in a dress once in a while. You knocked me out at the dance.”

“Do you want me to change?” I asked.

“No way, you look hot in those jeans!”

“Well, you look nice, too.” He was wearing jeans and a short-sleeved shirt, and I never realized how muscular his arms were before. Randy and Allison were already in the car, and after we got in it was nonstop conversation about how great the guys played and how much fun it was to be in the Pep Club. “I owe you big time,” I said to Allison.

“It was all part of my clever plan: I get you to join the Pep Club, you get to meet Bob, I get you to introduce me to his best friend...”

“Bro, these girls are dangerous,” Randy said from the back seat. I heard Allison giggle, then I heard her sigh, and I didn’t have to turn around to figure out what was going on.

Mom was waiting up for me when I got home around midnight, way past my curfew. She could tell

that I had been crying, and instead of taking my head off she took me into her arms. “It’s okay, honey, tell me all about it.”

“Oh Mom, I feel like such a fool!”

“What happened, Jenny? You can tell me, I promise I won’t get mad. Please, tell me what happened.” She led me over to the sofa and I curled up beside her with my head in her lap. I was shaking with sobs as she stroked my hair. A long time passed that way, me fighting back tears, she patiently waiting for her daughter to open up to her.

Finally I was able to sit up and talk. “It all started so great,” I began. “Bob drove us to the restaurant where Allison used to work, you know the same place where you met her, and we had a great time there. Then the guys said they wanted to take us to the drive-in.”

“There’s still a drive-in somewhere?”

“Yeah, it’s like twenty miles away.”

“I would never have approved of that!”

“Mom, you promised not to get mad at me.”

“I’m sorry, Jenny. Go ahead, tell me what happened.”

“Allison was all for it, and there wasn’t much I could do....”

“Let me stop you right there. You can always say no.”

“Mom?”

“Sorry. I promise I won’t interrupt any more.”

“So we drove to the drive-in, and before long Randy and Allison were going at it hot and heavy in the back seat. Which left me holding hands with Bob and trying to keep him out of my pants.”

Mom seemed genuinely shocked. “He seemed like such a nice boy....”

“He’s a guy, Mom.”

“What did you do?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Did anything bad happen?”

“Not to me.”

“Did he try to force himself on you?”

“No, but I could tell he was really bummed.”

“What were Randy and Allison doing all this time?”

“That’s the reason Bob was so bummed. They really got it on.”

“Do you mean she let him go all the way?”

“Sure sounded like it.”

Now she really was shocked. “Allison seemed like such a nice girl....”

“She is, Mom, just a normal teenage girl. I’m the one who has the big problem....”

“I blame myself for letting you go out with a boy so much older than you. What was I thinking?”

I was tired of talking, tired of boys, tired of trying to be a girl, tired of everything about my screwed-up life. “I’m sorry, Mom. I don’t think I’m ready for all this. I just want to go to bed now.”

“No more dates with boys who are old enough to drive.”

“Don’t worry. I don’t think Bob’s going to ask me out any more.” I trudged up the stairs and collapsed onto my bed, sobbing uncontrollably. How could I tell Mom what really happened? It felt so good when Bob started feeling my breasts, then he had my bra off and his hands started to slide down into my jeans. I was so afraid that he was going to discover my secret!

I finally did what I had to do to make him happy, and I was so ashamed and confused. After that, we just sat there in the front seat while Randy and Allison went at it. The ride back home seemed to take forever, and the little kiss he gave me after he walked me to the door was beyond awkward. It was like Bob couldn’t wait to escape.

I slept till way past noon on Sunday. The weather changed overnight, and it was pouring rain by the time I got up. It was really coming down, a soaking heavy rain which matched my mood. I lolled around the house all afternoon, still confused and embarrassed about the way I behaved the night before.

I was doing my homework when the telephone rang. My heart skipped a beat, thinking maybe it was Bob calling to talk to me, but the call was for Mom. She took it in her bedroom, and she was in there for a long time. When she finally came out, she was the one who'd been crying this time. "Mom, what's wrong?" I asked.

She sat down and took a deep breath. "That was your father."

When it rains, it pours. My dating dilemmas paled in comparison to what Mom had to tell me. It seems that my father, who had walked out on us several years before, had gotten wind of our financial settlement and wanted back in our lives. After leaving us penniless, with Mom having to move us into a crummy apartment and take a secretarial job to survive, he wanted to cash in on my misfortune.

I was terrified. My father had always been cold and aloof, and that was when I was his son. How would he react when he learned what had happened to me? "Does he know that I'm a girl now?" I asked with dread.

"No, thank God. All he knows is that we moved into a new house, and he's obviously been down on his luck. He wants to stop by and see us next weekend."

"No way!"

“I know, it’s terrible. But if I try to stop him, he might get a lawyer involved, and if that happens he’ll probably find out what happened to you. I can’t bear to think about what might happen then.”

“What do you mean?”

“What if he decides to publicize your condition?”

“Why would he do that?”

“To make money, of course.”

Could my father stoop so low? I didn’t want to believe it, but I knew that Mom could be right. “What are we going to do?”

It rained nonstop all weekend, and it was still miserable on Monday morning, so Mom drove me to school again. By this time my wardrobe had expanded to include a slicker with a little hood, and I had boots and a long skirt on, which made it hard to run when I got out of the car, but I was able to make it into JFK High without getting completely soaked. What a way to start my day!

I kept to myself all morning, and at lunch I sat with some kids I met at Pep Club, really cool girls who were fun to hang out with. There were even a few boys at our table, freshmen and sophomores, who seemed so immature compared to Bob! At one point I peeked over at our old lunch table and saw Allison and Randy exchanging soulful glances....Bob was there too, with

some other girl. My heart sank and I quickly looked away.

Instead of P.E. I went to study hall in the library every afternoon. Staring out the windows at the driving rain, I played nervously with the hem of my skirt while I racked my brain. If I thought I had problems in high school now, just wait till Dad put me on the Jerry Springer show! There had to be some way to stop him. I took out a sheet of paper and made a list of all the people who knew the truth about me. It was a very short list. Could any of them help us?

Before study hall was over, I hatched the scheme to save Mom and me from my worthless father. But first I had another week of school to get through as Jenny Wilson, and Pep Club practice, and a game on Saturday...when I got home that night and told Mom about my plan, she rejected it out of hand. But as the days went by, with my father's arrival looming and no other alternatives, she reluctantly agreed to go along.

JFK won again on Saturday, of course. Bob only caught ten passes and scored two more touchdowns. I cheered his name along with the other kids, but my heart just wasn't in it. Allison and I had a long talk during the game, she was desperately in love with Randy and she was beginning to wonder if she'd been too easy. They didn't have a date that night, and he wasn't calling her as much. You just can't win if you're a girl!

When I got home late Saturday afternoon, our company was waiting for me in the living room. Mom had tried to prepare them for what they were about to

see, but when I walked through the front door in my Pep Club outfit, it blew them away.

“Omigod, you look so like a girl!” Kathi shrieked.

“I love that skirt!” Kristi gushed. “Why can’t we wear stuff that cool at our high school?”

My cousins and I jumped up and down, hugging each other, while my aunt and uncle looked on, speechless. “If I hadn’t seen him with my own eyes, I never would have believed it,” my uncle finally said.

“Seen her, you mean,” my aunt corrected him. You can’t tell me that Jenny is not my niece now.” Just then the doorbell rang, and Mom got up to let Mr. Collins in. As drama coach, my homeroom teacher was skilled at costumes and makeup, and when I confided my problem to him one day after school, he was only too happy to help. Before long he was hard at work.

On Sunday afternoon, my father pulled into the driveway in a rented Lincoln Navigator, right on schedule. He looked as sleazy as I remembered, with his thinning hair combed across his head and his gut bulging over his tight trousers. As I watched him from an upstairs window, it made me feel good to know I’d never go bald now, and I vowed to watch my figure from now on.

I heard my mother open the door with a chilly greeting. “Hey babe, nice digs,” my father said. “Looks like your ship came in.”

“How did you find out where we lived?”

“I’ve been trying to find you so I could start making child support payments.” What a crock! He hadn’t sent us a dime since he walked out on Mom. “Where’s Jimmy?”

That was my cue. I shuffled down the stairs, my hair tucked under a baseball cap with the brim turned backwards, wearing a baggy sweatshirt and grunge pants. My breasts were uncomfortably squished by one of my old sports bras, and with one earring and wrap-around sunglasses, I looked like Barbra Streisand playing Yentl as a rapper wannabe. My father could only glower at me as I sat down next to Mom. “Jimmy, looks like you need some exercise, boy!” he said. “Are you playing any sports in school?”

“Up yours,” I said.

For a moment I thought he was going to haul off and belt me, but just then my uncle entered the room, looking like Jesse Ventura after a bad day in the ring with a feather boa. “Well well, look what the cat dragged in,” my uncle sneered.

“What are you doing here?” my father asked. The two of them had never gotten along, and they stood at opposite ends of the living room like two prizefighters sizing each other up before the bell.

“I live here, dude.”

“You moved in with your sister?” Dad asked Mom.

“Yes, no thanks to you. We’re lucky we’re not out on the street.” That was Kathi and Kristi’s cue, and they waltzed into the room looking like two teenaged hookers. My father gaped in astonishment at their micro skirts, stiletto heels and fishnet stockings.

“I need some bread for condoms,” Kristi said, an unlit cigarette dangling from her garish mouth.

“And I need a night off!” Kathi groaned. “My back is killing me.”

My father had done many bad things in his life, but I could tell that he was truly shocked. “You’re pimping your daughters?” he asked.

“That’s it. I’m gonna kick your ass into next Tuesday,” my uncle said as he started across the room.

“Whoa, this is too weird! I’m outa here!” my Dad said as he ran for the door.

“Wait,” my mother called after him as he jumped into his car. “What about those child support payments?” Her words were drowned out by his screeching tires as he disappeared, this time for good.

We all had a good laugh, and then we changed for dinner. It felt so nice to take off my old boy clothes and put on a dress again! It was like having sisters as Kathi and Kristi swapped makeup and clothes with me, and they insisted on doing something called a French braid to my hair that made me look so much older! Kathi and Kristi looked darling in their dresses too, and Mom

insisted on treating everyone to an expensive dinner at a fancy restaurant, including Mr. Collins and his wife.

There were many toasts to Mr. Collins, who brushed them all aside. "I was merely the director," he said modestly. "Jenny wrote the script."

"I want to thank you for being so kind to her," Mom said. "We were very apprehensive, but she's really enjoying high school."

"Really, I've had nothing to do with her success. Jenny has been accepted by everyone at JFK. To tell you the truth, she has more grace and style than most of the young women in her class."

"I knew you'd make a great girl, ever since that day at the mall," Kathi said.

"I don't think I've heard that story," my aunt said, and the adults hung on every word as we told them about my first outing as a girl. "Jimmy was a cool guy, but I like Jenny even better," Kristi said.

"I'm just glad my ex-husband never met her," Mom said.

"I think you've seen the last of him," my uncle said.

"Are you referring to my husband or my son?" Mom asked.

It was kind of a letdown when my cousins left for home early Monday morning, and I had to go back to the

grind. By now the novelty of dressing as a girl had worn off, and it was becoming second nature to me to put on my makeup, style my hair and decide what to wear. I did get a big wink from Mr. Collins on Monday morning, but he played it totally cool after that and I soon settled back into my routine.

Allison and I were best friends again. After Randy dumped her, she started dating another guy on the football team, but her heart still belonged to Randy. She told me how smart I'd been not to give it up to Bob, and how cheap and dirty she felt when she realized that she was a one-night stand. We talked on the phone for hours every night, until Mom finally put her foot down and told me I was neglecting my homework. Every now and then I'd learn little tidbits about Bob, which girl he was dating this week and what colleges he was thinking about. I guess I was still carrying the torch for him, because I had no interest in dating anyone else.

Autumn came, and there was a definite nip in the air. I liked walking to school, and I didn't even mind wearing nylons or tights to keep my legs warm. Once I got used to them, I hardly even knew I had them on, although they did make it a big pain when I went to the girls' room. I'd become so used to the little hassles and sacrifices of womanhood that I no longer complained about them, and I was looking forward to the day when I could complete the final step in my transition. I envied the girls who got to play volleyball and basketball in P.E. every day while I was hunkered down in the library.

So I wasn't all that scared when I got home from school one day and Mom told me it was time. "Dr. Silver says your psychiatrist has cleared you for sexual reassignment surgery. You'll be in the hospital for

several days, and he thinks he can schedule it over Thanksgiving break so you won't miss too many classes. Are you sure you're ready for this, Jenny?"

There was no longer any doubt in my mind. After my castration, I stopped thinking of myself as a guy, but I knew that I would never be able to think of myself as a woman until I could share that part of myself with a man. In my dreams, I still hoped that maybe Bob would ask me out again someday, and if he ever did, I vowed to be ready for him. I told Mom to schedule my surgery without delay.

There was still one more football game before the season ended, and the school was in a frenzy all week. As Bob had predicted, JFK High was still undefeated, and if they won on Saturday they would be a lock for the state championship. The Pep Club held extra practices to work on a special program for halftime, and we were all excited about our new routines. When Saturday came, it was cold and overcast. Thankfully, we were allowed to wear dance tights under our outfits, but even in my thick letter sweater I was shivering in the stands before the game.

The game started well, with JFK scoring an early touchdown, then the other team recovered a fumble and tied the score. It remained like that for the rest of the first half, then we were out on the field strutting our stuff. I remember commenting to Allison how chewed up the field was, and how sorry I felt for the guys having to try to keep their footing. My words must have been an omen, because on the first play from scrimmage in the second half, Bob went downfield for a long pass and stumbled as he reached up for the ball. He was off balance when he caught it, and when he came back

down, an opposing player was waiting for him. Crack! You could hear Bob's leg break from the stands, and there was a deathly silence when he was carried off the field. Tears were streaming down my cheeks as he was wheeled into an ambulance and taken to the hospital.

That seemed to take the fight out of our team, and they lost in the last minute, 14-7. We were like zombies as we filed out of the stands for the long ride home. There was a big homecoming dance that night, but I didn't have a date for it, so I stayed home with Mom and tried to psych myself up for my operation. I'd read all the literature Dr. Silver gave us, and I knew I was in for a lot of pain. "How long will I be in the hospital?" I asked.

"Two or three days. You'll be heavily sedated at first, and it will be uncomfortable when they change your dressings. I want you to know that I'll be there with you day and night."

"You don't have to do that, Mom."

"Oh yes I do! I'll let you in on a little secret. Before you were born, I really hoped that you'd be a girl. Of course I loved you anyway, but I'd always dreamed of having a daughter. Well, now that I'm about to get one, I'm not taking any chances! I'll be watching the doctors and nurses around the clock."

I don't remember anything about my surgery. Of course, I was under heavy anesthesia, and even after I woke up I was so full of drugs that I didn't really know where I was or what was happening to me. I do

remember Mom holding my hand and Dr. Silver standing over me in the recovery room as I drifted in and out of consciousness. When I finally came around, the pain between my legs was vicious, and the first time I went to the bathroom was sheer agony. I cursed, I cried, and I begged for more painkillers.

Gradually things got better. I was able to get up and walk around in my hospital gown, leaning against Mom for support at first, and eventually I was able to get around on my own. I was shocked at how drawn and pale my face looked in the mirror, and the bandages between my legs weren't pretty. The worst part of every day was when they removed my dressings and inserted a dilator into my virgin vagina. It felt like I'd been impaled each time, and I whimpered when the nurses told me to be brave.

Because I was so young and my male parts had become so small, my recovery time was relatively swift. I would be able to recuperate at home for another few days before going back to school, and it looked like I'd only miss a few days of classes. My friends had been told that I'd gone in for minor "female surgery", and nobody pried. On the day I was to be released, Mom brought a small suitcase with some clothes and makeup, and for the first time in my life, I dressed myself in women's clothing as a woman. My panties finally fit my body, and my dress and stockings felt so right now. I took my time with my hair and makeup, and I was almost presentable when I was wheeled out of my room.

Good thing! I was waiting in the lobby in my wheelchair for Mom to get the car when I felt a tap on my shoulder. "Jenny?"

My heart skipped a beat when I looked up and saw Bob, in crutches, with his leg in a cast. “I didn’t know you were here,” he said. “What happened to you?”

“Oh nothing, just some minor surgery,” I lied. “I felt so bad when I saw you get hurt. Is it bad?”

“I’m just bummed about the way the season ended.”

“Will you be able to play in college?”

“The doctors say it’s a clean break and I’ll be okay. But it looks like the basketball season is shot.”

“I’m really sorry.”

“I am too, Jenny.”

“Huh?”

“For the way I treated you that night. I should never have come on to you like that. I’ve thought about it a lot.”

“It’s okay, really.”

“No, it’s not. You weren’t ready, and I shouldn’t have pushed it. I’ve been kicking myself ever since.”

“Well, you can’t do that anymore,” I said, poking his cast.

“No, I guess not,” he laughed. “I’ve really missed you, Jen.”

“I’ve missed you too, Bob. A lot.”

“Looks like I won’t be able to drive anywhere for a while, but when I get this cast off, maybe we could go out?”

Just then Mom pulled up to the curb, and she smiled when she saw us together. “I see you two have something in common,” she said.

I got out of the wheelchair, stood up on my tiptoes and gave him a little kiss. “Call me,” I said.

On the way back home, we stopped at our lawyer’s office to sign some legal forms changing my name and birth records. I was now officially Miss Jennifer Wilson, female. I was still pretty sore down there, so I spent the next few days with my feet up, reading the homework assignments that Allison brought over to me after school each day. She was thrilled for me when I told her about Bob, and we spent hours talking about school, clothes and boys.

Bob called me every night. It was so easy to talk to him! His cast was coming off in January, just in time for Winterfest, the biggest social event at JFK next to the senior prom. When Bob finally asked me if I’d go with him, I was on cloud nine! It was a formal affair, and Mom and I spent hours at the mall looking for the perfect dress, and then there were the matching shoes, purse and lingerie...good thing we were rich!

Mom made an appointment for me at her hair salon when the big day arrived. It was fun being pampered, having my nails done and my hair shampooed, tinted and fluffed to perfection. Then it was home for a long,

hot bubble bath before I got myself dressed for the dance. My dress had spaghetti straps that showed a lot of skin, but it covered me in all the right places and made me feel so sexy! For bling I wore a little diamond pendant and matching earrings, and Mom treated me to a spritz of her most expensive cologne. My pantyhose were so sheer I was almost afraid to put on my strappy little sandals.

Bob was waiting for me when I made my grand entrance, like Scarlett O'Hara, down the curving staircase. "Wow," was all he could manage as he fastened a corsage to my wrist. Mom took our picture, kissed me on the cheek and slipped away. "You look sensational," Bob finally said.

"Right back at ya," I replied. "You look awesome in a tux."

"They're kind of a pain to put on."

"Tell me about it," I laughed as he helped me put on my coat. "Try getting dressed up like this sometime."

"No way," he said. "I can't even imagine what it must be like to be a chick."

"I'll tell you all about it sometime."

Needless to say, I was walking on air all night, even if it was backwards in high heels. There were a lot of slow dances, and we didn't sit out any of them. When my toes couldn't take it any more and I finally kicked off my heels, my chin just rested on his shoulder as he squirmed me around the floor in my stocking feet. We talked about nothing in particular as he held me tight.

I asked him if he wanted to come inside when we got back home. Mom had already gone to bed, and Bob snuggled with me on the sofa for quite some time. My breasts were waiting for him when he peeled off my spaghetti straps, and this time I didn't flinch when his hands continued to roam. My long dress kept him from getting very far, but just knowing that I was all woman down there made it so much better this time. I played with him like I'd been there before, and I could tell that he was feeling good when we finally kissed goodnight.

The rest of the school year flew by. Bob walked me home from school every afternoon, and we were inseparable that spring, going out every weekend. It was no surprise when he asked me to the Senior Prom, although I was embarrassed when we were voted the cutest couple in the high school yearbook!

My prom dress, a taffeta confection with a long, flowing skirt and a plunging neckline, was ice blue, and it took forever to find a purse, shoes, shawl and lingerie to match. The day before the prom, Mom took me to a day spa and I experienced the works: manicure, pedicure, facial, even a bikini wax. Except for the wax, it was heaven! The next day my hair was styled with romantic curls at Mom's salon, and by the time I got dressed, I felt like a living doll. My dress felt so cool against my bare skin! Bob was gorgeous in his white tuxedo, with a cummerbund and matching tie in our school colors. We couldn't keep our hands off each other, and we left the prom early....



The next day my hair was styled with romantic curls at Mom's salon, and by the time I got dressed, I felt like a living doll.

I was over the moon when Bob got a football scholarship to the state university, but before long it was time for him to leave. By then our friends were teasing us that we were like an old married couple, and we both knew that once he left for college, it could never last. I was going to miss him terribly, but I also knew in my heart that it was better this way. We'd meet new people, and it was inevitable that we would drift apart. In a way, I was almost relieved that I would never have to tell him my secret.

Sophomore year was a drag without Bob, but I made new friends and got into girls' sports. I guess I had an edge, having been a boy all those years, even if I never was much of an athlete. I excelled at softball, if only because I didn't throw like a girl, and it was a hoot having the Pep Club cheer for me for a change! Allison's father was transferred and she moved away, but we did our best to keep in touch.

The rest of my high school career was pretty undistinguished, which was probably a good thing considering all that I'd been through. Although I had my share of dates, I never met another guy who excited me like Bob. I graduated as just another girl, and took some classes at a local community college before getting a job as a flight attendant. It was hard work and the hours were brutal, but I loved to travel and meet new people. Mom and I were still very close, but she knew it was time for me to leave the nest.

One winter day I was walking through a crowded airport when I saw a familiar face. It was Bob! He was gone through the security line before I could catch up

with him, and suddenly I was feeling very sorry for myself. Christmas was coming up, and with my low seniority I'd be working over the holidays. I sadly put Bob out of my mind as I tugged my little suitcase behind me on the way to my flight, just another flight attendant in her navy blue uniform, stockings and heels.

I was working a charter flight for a professional football team that day, and I was handing out menus when I came face to face with Bob again. This time he couldn't get away! My hair was a lot shorter, but still blonde, and he recognized me in an instant. "Jenny!" he said with a big smile. "You look terrific!"

I'm sure I blushed bright crimson as I moved on to the other passengers. After we took off, I found an excuse to go back to Bob's seat, and he insisted that I sit down beside him. "I can only talk for a minute," I said.

"I know. It's so great seeing you again!"

"I didn't know you were in the NFL."

"Barely. I'm a rookie and I don't get to play very much." He looked handsomer than ever, and a lot more muscular, if that was possible. He slipped a note in my hand as I was returning to my duties. "Here's my cell phone number. I'd love to have dinner with you tonight if you're free."

Fortunately I had time to go shopping for a dress to wear. It was bitterly cold out but I went with something a little daring...I was determined not to blow this! I called Bob and gave him the number of my hotel room,

and my heart jumped like I was back in high school when he phoned from the lobby.

He took me to a quiet little Italian restaurant, and at first it seemed like we had never been away from each other, as we bantered back and forth like we did when we were teenagers. He ordered a nice Chardonnay, and I was feeling very mellow. "How can you stand playing football when it's so cold out?" I asked.

"I'll let you in on a little secret. We wear queen-sized pantyhose under our uniforms."

"No way!"

"All the NFL teams do it." I couldn't stop laughing at the thought of Bob in pantyhose. "Hey, it's not that funny," he said. "It takes a real man to wear them."

How true, I thought to myself. "Don't worry, Bob, your secret's safe with me."

The waiter came, and after we ordered, I decided the time had come. "So, are you married?" I asked.

"Nope. Still looking. How about you?"

"Stopped looking. I guess I'll be single all my life."

"Come on, Jenny, you're a beautiful woman. You could have any guy you wanted."

"I've got a secret too, Bob."

“Jenny Wilson, the All American Girl, has a secret? This I’ve got to hear.” He poured me another glass of wine. “Give.”

I knew I had nothing to lose, but I was still so scared! I’d probably never see him again, but at least it would bring some closure to tell him the truth. “When I was in eighth grade, I came down with a condition called gynecomastia.”

“Sounds bad. What did it do to you?”

“It...it made my body change.”

“Well, you sure can’t complain about the results!”

“I did then. For the first thirteen years of my life, my name wasn’t Jenny. It was Jimmy.” I felt a tear running down my cheek.

If Bob was freaked out, he didn’t show it. He just stared at me for the longest time, like he was trying to comprehend what I was telling him. “You were a boy?”

“Yes. When my condition was diagnosed, I wanted to kill myself, and if it hadn’t been for Mom, I’m sure I would have.”

“So what did you do?”

“Mom enrolled me at JFK High as a girl, and during freshman year I had two operations to make me a she.”

“Freshman year? That’s when we were going out!”

“I had the second operation at the same hospital where they treated your broken leg.”

“I remember now, seeing you in the hospital...this is just so far out. I mean, you never looked anything like a guy. How did you get so good at being a girl?”

“I guess I was a natural. Maybe I never was cut out to be a man. I had a lot of help from Mom, even though I fought her every step of the way, but eventually I just gave in and learned to live with it.”

“Wow,” was all he could say. Our dinners came, and we ate in silence for a while. I already regretted my foolish decision to tell him...why couldn't I have just enjoyed the evening together and gone on with my life? When he finally spoke, there was a seriousness I'd never heard before in his voice. “I spent a lot of time in the hospital when I was a kid, too,” he said.

“You did?”

“When I was ten, I came down with a bad case of Scarlet Fever. It almost killed me. When I got better, the doctors told me that it made me sterile.”

I took his hand in sympathy. “Oh Bob, I'm so sorry.”

“I guess that's why I got so into sports, to compensate in some way. I'll never be able to be a dad, which is why I've never asked anyone to marry me.”

Our minds met at that moment, and I trembled when I realized what he might be thinking. “Me, too,” I

said. “I may be a woman, but I can never have children. That’s why I’m stuck being single.”

“No, you’re not. Jenny, there’s never been anyone else like you for me. I don’t care if you’re an alien from outer space! Just being with you again reminds me of how much I always loved you.”

The tears were streaming down my face now. “I’ve never stopped loving you.”

“Do you think you could be happy with a guy who wears pantyhose to work?”

“I’m your girl.”

Life has a way of settling old scores. Two days later, I was passing through another airport when I happened to notice the sports section of USA TODAY. The front page featured a long article about the rookie wide receiver who got his big chance on Sunday when his team’s starter was knocked out of the game with a broken leg in the first half. All Bob Thornton did was make two spectacular catches for touchdowns, leading his team to an upset win and a berth in the playoffs. I smiled at the memory of our night together before the game. Guess I didn’t wear him out after all!

Six months later, Super Bowl MVP Bob Thornton’s wedding was the social event of the year back home. It was held in our home, and Mom was in her glory, organizing everything like Martha Stewart. She insisted on taking me to an expensive bridal salon, where I tried on dreamy dress after dreamy dress until I found just

the right one. It had a halter top and a ball skirt, and the long train that was almost impossible to walk in, but I just had to have it!

Mom was happy to deal with the caterers, the band and the flowers while I got ready for my big day. Allison was my maid of honor, and we had so much fun getting ready! A lot of our old friends from JFK were there, of course, and several of Bob's NFL buddies came too. Needless to say, Allison zeroed in on the cutest one, and a few months later, we went to their wedding!

Only a few members of my bridal party knew the secret about Jenny Wilson. My uncle, looking like Governor Jesse Ventura this time, gave me away, and Kathi and Kristi were ravishing as bridesmaids. Mom and her sister were bawling like babies when I made my long, slow entrance down the curving staircase to our living room. I felt like a princess in my long white dress, and Bob was gorgeous as usual in his morning suit and striped tie. When the minister asked if anyone knew any reason why the bride and groom shouldn't be married, I held my breath! Then we were pronounced man and wife, and we kissed to cheers and applause from our friends and family.

A sports reporter crashed the wedding, and he cornered me during the reception in our backyard. "Is it true that you were Bob Thornton's high school sweetheart?" he asked me.

"Yes," I replied warily.

"This isn't my beat. Can you describe that dress you're wearing?"

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“Let’s see, my dress is made of peau satin and Battenburg lace, with a funnel neck and a full skirt. That was a semi-cathedral detachable train, oh and this is a Basque waist”. I watched him sweat as he tried to write it all down.

“Wow, that’s a mouthful. I guess you’ve dreamed of wearing a dress like that ever that since you were a little girl, huh?”

Bob rescued me before I could come up with a response. “Hit the road, pal.”

“I’m just doing my job. What’s your wife’s name, so I can get it right for the story?” he asked as Bob started to hustle him out the gate.

I felt a little sorry for him. “My name is Jenny Wilson,” I said for the last time.

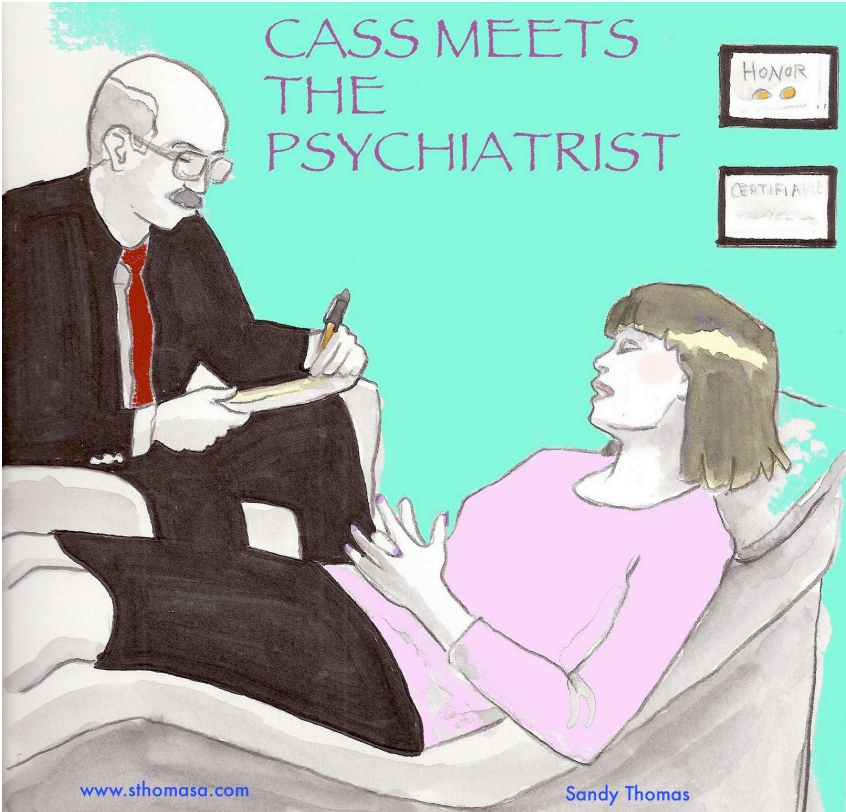
“No, it’s not,” my husband said. “Her name is Jenny Thornton.”

THE END....

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JENNY WILSON
I'M YOUR GIRL!



CASS MEETS THE PSYCHIATRIST

Sandy Thomas
FROM TRANSVESTIA #77

The nurse arose, adjusted the gold-rimmed glasses on her thin, almost hawk-like nose, and stood waiting behind her desk as the young blonde in the mini-skirt entered the reception room. She looked impatiently at the clock to convey her annoyance to patients who arrive late.

“Bellingham...” said Cass. “I have an appointment.”

The nurse looked down at her appointment book running her finger over a list of names. She looked up slowly, “We were expecting a man? Casper Bellingham?”

“I’d rather you called me ‘Cass’...it’s much more suitable. Don’t you agree?” said Cass, wrinkling his nose. “Sorry I’m late, I couldn’t find a close place to park and didn’t want to walk by all that construction.”

The nurse forced a thin-lipped smile of sorts. “Doctor Patewaner has been waiting for you.”

She showed Cass into the office. “Doctor, this is Casper...er...Cass Bellingham.”

“Thank you,” Cass whispered as he sidestepped past the befuddled nurse.

The consulting room reminded Cass of a Hollywood set. Such conformity...appointment book...furniture of dark oak upholstered in coal black leather accented with brass studs. A huge desk with a rather noisy clock. Behind the desk was a solid wall of hooks which, while they might have had their intended impressive effect on others, served only to further reduce Cass’ already significant lack of faith in the likes of Dr. Patewaner and their craft.

Golly, Cass thought, “If he needs all those hide-bound reference tomes, he can’t really be too sure of himself...”

Dr. Patewaner was sitting forward with his legs crossed, elbow-to-knee, thumb-to-chin on the edge of an overstuffed chair near the head of a typical psychiatric couch also overstuffed, tufted and buttoned in black leather matching the other pieces.

Dr. Patewaner was a short man, Cass guessed, about fifty-five and balding. He wore a dark gray three piece suit, a white shirt and blue tie. His shoes were black. His gray socks were covered with tiny flecks of lint.

The doctor made no move or gesture of any kind.

“Hi!” said Cass flashing small white teeth in a devastating smile as he unbuttoned his fun-fur coat: “Don’t bother getting up!”

Dr. Patewaner dropped his head slightly and looked over the top of his glasses: “Are you always late?”

“Gosh no,” said Cass stripping off the coat and fluffing out the curls, “Only when I’m not on time!”

“Being late is significant.”

“Significant? Yes, that I shouldn’t expect to park a Mercedes in a city full of Volkswagens. Do you drive, Doctor?”

“Yes, a very small practical car young lady...I mean man!” Dr. Patewaner corrected himself. “Please lie on the couch and make yourself comfortable. I’d like to take down your particulars.”

I’ll bet you would, Cass thought as he repressed a grin, sat and swung his smooth legs up and leaned against the raised back of the couch. As an afterthought he reached forward, took off his high-heeled pumps and dropped them beside the couch. Cass wondered is the doctor would notice that they were expensive and fashionable Italian shoes.

“Relax,” said the doctor his pencil noisily scratching on a stenographic pad. “How old are you?”

“I am relaxed,” Cass replied, smiling inwardly at the triteness of it all. “You shouldn’t ask a lady her age.”

“We need to be real here,” the doctor said glancing down at Cass’ legs and high heels again. “I am told you are not a female. Tell me why you came to see me!”

“Because my father sent...actually forced me. You know you shouldn’t be concerned about being short...lots of men are below average in stature. Are you wearing lifts in your shoes?”

"This is not about me. Why do you suppose your father sent you?"

"Duh! Probably because he doesn't like the way I dress. He has this old fashioned thing about clothes and hair length...silly stuff."

"Does your mother say anything about your clothes?"

"She likes them...she borrows them but it's mostly Daddy's problem; he has something grim to say almost every day!"

"Why did you come to my office dressed like that?"

"Good grief Luv!" said Cass, twisting up onto his elbow and turning to the doctor. "Does it embarrass you like Daddy? What's wrong with a sweater and a tweed skirt in mid-afternoon in the winter...don't answer. Let me guess...you don't like mini-skirts or you think my fun-fur too funky. Is it my sweater? Too tight?"

"I think you know what I mean," the doctor suggested, disdainfully serious.

"It's the mini..."

"Come, come now..."

"Well, which?" Cass asked dropping back on the couch. "It's what all the girls are wearing in the big cities..." Cass looked at the doctor. "I suppose you're like Daddy. You think I should wear a suit and tie like you. But I really look like something else in a man's suit...my long blonde hair and all. It's not a wig you know? I do have a cute pantsuit thing though. I could have worn that?"

"Why didn't you wear a regular man's suit?"

"Like I said, I didn't want to embarrass or shock you."

"Nothing shocks me, young lady...er, young man!"

"Why don't you call me 'Cass'? I'm surprised that nothing embarrasses you; that's significant you know."

The doctor cleared his throat as Cass adjusted a long blonde tendril that had fallen across his face.

“Why are you uptight about my coming dressed this way? Are you afraid to look at my chest?”

“I’m not uptight!”

“I don’t mind you looking. It’s normal. Why bring what I’m wearing up at all...or do you always discuss your patient’s clothes?”

“It’s why your father sent you.”

“Do you want to know what I’m wearing underneath my clothes? Did you ask your nurse what she’s wearing underneath her uniform?”

With a bit of a superior tone, he said, “I assume you are wearing women’s lingerie?”

“No,” Cass giggled. “I am wearing MY lingerie. I bought the matching bra and panties on sale and my slip was a gift from my mother. I owe nothing on credit so they are MY UNDERWEAR.”

The doctor blew his nose in a large white handkerchief that he stuffed back into his pocket with much ado; “Let’s move on to something else.”

“Yes, let’s,” said Cass.

“Tell me...do you really believe that you are a girl?”

Cass crossed his nyloned legs, wrinkling his brow thoughtfully, “Sometimes I really feel like a girl.”

“Hmmm,” the doctor sighed, then asked, “Can you prove to me that you feel like a girl?”

“Yes, but I’m not going to. You’ll just have to take my word for it. Besides, all we are talking about is me being a boy.”

“Do you like wearing a brassiere?”

“Back to my underwear, eh? I’d better like wearing bras.” Cass was aware of where the doctor’s eyes were fixed. “I’m probably going to be wearing one for the rest of my life. This one fits really nice in the band area and is comfy all day. Looks good, right?”

Dr. Patewaner, perplexed, changed his approach: "You're not content with the way you were born, are you?"

"Who is?" Cass retorted. "You're not content, you change yourself, make yourself taller, shave your natural beard and your suit has padded shoulders. I see other stuff too. Heaven only knows what else you're into. It's all a matter of degree and mostly a matter of fashion!"

"Perhaps, but as you know, your father is deeply concerned about your life style. How do you feel about that?"

"Terrible," Cass replied. "I'm worried about him."

"Are you teasing?"

"Golly no, Doctor," said Cass. "I'm really worried. I'm afraid Daddy needs help. He reacts so strangely...gets so uptight about my clothes. I used to think it was just the bills from the department store but now I'm not so sure...there's something deeper troubling him."

"He's worried about you buying nothing but girl's clothes."

"Girl's clothes do cost more you know? And I pay my own bills now."

The doctor said, "Your father is worried about that but also because you are doing what girls do. Your hair is as long as my nurse? Aren't you concerned?"

"It can hardly be justified nowadays with unisex hair styles and such. But to answer your question, no. I would be worried if I had to go around in men's clothes. Anyone who saw me that way would freak out! Do I look like a girl or a boy to you? If you didn't know...tell the truth?"

"Well...you appear to be a female."

"Go on...what kind of female?"

"Well...a very lovely, young attractive girl."

“I look like a man at all?”

“No.”

“Then stop asking nutty questions!”

“All right...!” Dr. Patewaner snapped. He paused and looked at the ceiling, his left foot pounding deeply into the carpet. “Tell me about your early years...what do you remember most vividly? Were you close to your mother?”

“When I was born? I was VERY, VERY close to her...like all babies,” Cass laughed

The doctor shook his head. “Okay then, later....”

“Well...let’s see...then I was small...a mere child in fact.” Cass asked, “Why didn’t YOU ever marry?”

“Never mind that...go on about YOUR childhood.”

“Duh...I went to school. Perhaps you never married because you have some sub...I mean unconscious deep-seated feeling of insecurity...inferiority...being short and like that. Do you ever give THAT any thought?”

“Did you like school?” Dr. Patewaner tried to keep the conversation on course.

“Yes. I had a very happy childhood...except that I was made to dress as a boy. Not my bag at all. That was probably a traumatic experience, right?”

“What else can you remember? Maybe the first time you wanted to put on lipstick?”

“My mother was going out with my father and she said, ‘I have to go put on my face’. I wanted another face to put on too!”

“Then what?”

“I grew up and realized I had a brain.”

“Hmmm...?”

Cass burst into laughter: “Oh golly, I wondered when you were going to get around to saying ‘hmmm’... it’s so hokey!”

Dr. Patewaner stopped in the middle of his question and sat silently for a moment. His pencil tap-

tap-tapped on his note-pad. He looked carefully at Cass who had been living in women's clothes and appeared to adapt very well to the lifestyle. He asked, "Was being a boy so bad?"

"No. It's not bad unless one has a better alternative."

"Did someone force you to dress like this? Your mother maybe...when your father was away?"

"Did my father tell you that?" Cass asked. "My mother only took me down to a used clothing store and bought my starter wardrobe."

"Starter wardrobe?"

"A boy can't just throw on an old dress and look like this!" Cass ran his manicured hands down over his curves. "You have to learn how to be a girl while wearing a dress and learn proper ladylike mannerisms. It's not easy, you know?"

"So just wear pants...you know, boy clothes."

"Lots of people wear dresses and skirts every day. You should try it. You'd get used to wearing them, I promise. Skirts are very comfortable."

The doctor frowned. "Men don't wear skirts."

"It just takes time," Cass giggled. "Pretty soon you won't even think about putting on a dress and high heels every day. Wearing a bra will become second nature to you, just like it is for all women. Oh, and those high heels? You'd love being taller."

"Yeah? Er...that's not for me," responded Dr. Patewaner. "So tell me how you feel when you are wearing a sexy dress?"

"I feel special," Cass said. "I feel sensual and uniquely me. My biggest problem is what to wear."

"Don't you want your father's respect?"

"Ohhh, I want him to like me," Cass sighed, reaching up, his slender fingers slightly nervous as he brushed a lock of golden hair from his cheek.

The doctor liked to see a loss of some composure in his patients. Cass beginning to shift his hips slightly as his soft voice said whispering girlishly, “I like who I’ve become. It’s Daddy’s problem.”

“He just wants his son back,” Dr. Patewaner suggested.

Cass took a breath, and shook his curls of blonde hair to make them spread on the back of the lounge. “I could bring him home a son-in-law if he wants one so bad?” Cass laughed, “All Daddy’s friends at his county club like me, especially his men friends! I am comfortable being feminine. So you are not married?”

“How do you know I’m not married?”

“Oh, that’s easy,” said Cass. “You have lint on your socks. Married men seldom have that - I’d never let my husband go to the office in dirty socks! Were you ever...involved?”

Dr. Patewaner reflected for a while and then: “Well...there was a girl...once...”

“Yes,” Cass prompted, “go on.”

“We went to school together.”

“Did you love her very much?”

“No, she ran off with a used-car salesman.” He snapped out of his brief reflective mood, then, speaking brusquely. “Let’s move on to something else. Sex.”

“Groovy,” said Cass, settling back on the couch. “Did you have sex with this girl?” Cass whispered, eyeing the closed door.

“Of course not!” the doctor snapped.

“Oooh...!” Cass squealed, up on his elbow again. “You have a thing about sex! You poor thing...no wonder you’re all hung-up!”

“I’m not hung-up!”

“You are so! And you’ll have to admit to it if I’m going to be of any help to you, Doctor Patewaner,” said Cass sitting up and swinging his smooth nyloned legs

off the couch, wiggled his feet into his high heels and stood up. "Here, why don't you lie down and tell me all about it!"

Dr. Patewaner meekly handed his stenographic pad to Cass, got up and stepped to the couch. He settled down and folded his hands on his stomach.

"Okay...sex!" Cass exclaimed, taking the doctor's place in the black leather armchair. "You are so wrapped up with the problems of others that you have no time to think about your poor self..."

Cass ripped off the page of doodles the doctor had made on the pad, squashed it into a ball and fired it across the office into a tarnished brass garbage pail. "I'm ready...now, what seems to be the problem?"

END

The above story was written in the 1970's. In December 2012 the American Psychiatric Association's Board of Trustees approved certain notable changes to their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Patients whose subjective experience of gender does not match their biological sex, the T in LGBT is to be replaced with the more neutral term "gender dysphoria."

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