

Rainbow-School-For-Girls
Teacher's Journal



E. B Stevenson



A "New Woman" Novel.



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**THE RAINBOW SCHOOL FOR GIRLS:
Teachers' Journal**

by E.B. Stevenson

**Erica Marie Roberts, Department of
Fashion Design**

At six-three and 175 pounds with size 42DD breasts, I'm often confused for a male-to-female transsexual. Yet, I was born a girl. I went to some of the top fashion schools in New York while pursuing my degree in secondary education at Yale. I got my Master's in Social Work at the Sorbonne while I was working in Paris. I'm now in my sixth year of teaching Fashion Design at the Rainbow School for Girls' New York campus on Long Island. I'm thirty-eight years old, married to Harry Roberts, my childhood sweetheart, and the proud mother of two girls, Heather and Emily. I live in Patchogue on Long Island, and commute every day to work. After working with some of the top fashion designers of the world in New York,

Paris, Milan and London, I decided I wanted to teach my craft. I came to Rainbow because of the stellar reputation of its fashion design programs; I also wanted to live close to our families on Long Island. The students at this school wear green plaid skirts, white blouses, white knee-high socks and green flats.

The week after Labor Day was an eventful one indeed. My students were designing the bridesmaids' gowns and flower girl's gown for the upcoming wedding of Karen Bodkin, one of the teachers in the English department. She was about to marry John Reilly, one of the teachers in the Science department. Karen and John have both taught at the school for the past three years; they met while they were teaching together at the school's home campus in San Francisco. Two of her bridesmaids, including the maid of honor, are transsexuals. Karen had selected mauve for the bridesmaids, while pink was selected for the flower girl. I was personally designing Karen's wedding gown. She wanted the gown to be so breathtakingly romantic that she would outshine even the flower girl and ring bearer.

The classrooms used by the Fashion Design department were on the ground floor of the Fine Arts building; each room has four changing rooms. A week after Labor Day, I had the third hour Advanced Fashion Design I class, meeting in Room 18, witness the final fitting for the bridesmaid's gown of the maid of honor, Amber Thomas. She's five-nine with shoulder-length medium brown hair and a slender build. Teaching in the English department, she joined us five years ago, when she began her transition from a man named Allen. She had her sex-change operation on her summer vacation two years ago. She was on her planning period; she decided to go to our classroom to get the fitting done. She was wearing a mauve skirt, antique white blouse, white stockings and a pair of white high heels.

“Girls, Miss Thomas is here to get her final fitting done for her bridesmaid’s gown. As you may know, she’s the maid of honor in Miss Bodkin’s wedding to Mr. Reilly this weekend. One of our students from last spring’s Advanced Fashion Design I class designed these gowns based on specifications provided by Miss Bodkin and her bridesmaids. She’s now taking the Advanced Fashion Design II class with Miss Oliver. A wedding is a very special event in anyone’s life; it’s especially the case in the life of a woman. Every woman, regardless of whether she was born male or female, dreams about the day of her wedding. The gowns in a wedding can be as simple as just an ankle-length gown, or as elaborate as a princess-style gown. It takes as long as several months from start to finish this kind of masterpiece. The whole idea behind designing a gown for a wedding is to exude an air of romance. The bride’s wedding day is the most romantic of her life,” I explained.

“Mrs. Roberts, how long did it take to create this masterpiece?” asked Kara Jackson, a sophomore in my class.

“From the design process to the final fitting, it has taken five months. Miss Bodkin and Mr. Reilly announced their engagement at the end of March. We began the design process after we came back from Spring Break. We started fitting the entire bridal party for their gowns in late April. Our fashion design students in our jobs program stayed the entire summer to work on these designs. The first gown was sewn in July; it’s for the junior bridesmaid, Jessica Allen. Her final fitting was done just before the academic year started. Jessica is a freshman at Rainbow-New York. The flower girl’s gown was done in May; the fitting was the final exam for the Intermediate Fashion Design II class. The flower girl is Hannah Bodkin, the bride’s four-year-old niece,” I replied.

“Who would like to help me get into my gown?” Amber asked the class. Kara raised her hand, along with two freshman girls, Carly Martin and Felicia Orton, and another sophomore, Jennifer Wold. “The gown is in Fitting Room Three,” I told them as they went off to the fitting room to get Amber into her bridesmaid’s gown.

I continued my lecture on creating dresses and gowns for special events while Kara, Carly, Felicia and Jennifer helped Amber into her bridesmaid’s gown. A new student named Tessa Chiang, a freshman and a ward of the court from Jersey City, asked me: “Mrs. Roberts, to what extent do the students get involved in a teacher’s wedding?”

“I’m glad you asked that question, Tessa. Our students get involved in most aspects of planning for the wedding of one of our teachers. When one of our teachers is planning to wed, she has the option of having the dresses for her bridal party designed by the students in our department. The bride-to-be is very flexible in this respect; she can opt to have only her gown designed by the students. She also can have the students design only the bridesmaids’ gowns, or only the flower girl’s gown. We have had a few brides at some of our campuses that have had their bridesmaids’ gowns and the flower girl’s gown designed by our students. Most often, she has the students design the gowns for the entire bridal party. Our school encourages our girls to participate in the planning of a teacher’s wedding,” I explained.

Inside the changing room, the girls were gently pulling the skirt of Amber’s gown over the crinoline. “I’ve always dreamed of wearing a beautiful dress like this,” Carly confessed as she was making sure the skirt clung to the crinoline.

“Have you ever been a junior bridesmaid before?” Kara asked her.



“I haven’t been a junior bridesmaid yet. I’ve only been a girl for a year now,” Carly replied.

“I was a junior bridesmaid in my sister’s wedding last spring. That was before my operation,” added Jennifer.

“I was a junior bridesmaid when Miss Jones and Mr. Amberg married last summer,” Felicia added.

“Well, how do I look?” Amber asked.

“Look in the mirror for yourself,” Carly replied before she turned her around.

Amber was in awe at how she looked. “The gown is beautiful!” she exclaimed.

“Let’s show this to our teacher and classmates,” Jennifer added.

It was ten minutes later that Amber and the girls emerged from the dressing room. Needless to say, they were in awe at Amber’s gown.

When Amber stepped up on the short pedestal in front of the mirror, I continued my lecture. “Note that all gowns for special events, such as for Miss Bodkin’s upcoming wedding, are form-fitting. Every detail of her bodice, in this case, has to conform to her body shape. Miss Thomas’ gown is measured to conform to her body shape; her bust line is slightly larger than most transsexual women, and her body shape is about the average shape for a woman who wears a size twelve dress. Miss Keith, who will have her gown fitting finalized tomorrow, is a much larger woman, and, like Miss Thomas, is a male-to-female transsexual. Wednesday will be the final fitting for Miss Bodkin’s wedding gown. The idea behind fitting gowns for special events is to make sure the dress conforms to her figure.”

After I finished the lecture for the day, I walked out with Amber. “Erica, are you and Harry coming to the wedding on Friday?” she asked me.

“Harry and I are coming; we’re bringing our girls to the wedding,” I replied.

“I really look forward to seeing Heather and Emily. What are they doing now?”

“Heather is in kindergarten now; she’s in a full-day program. Emily is in pre-school, also in a full-day program. Harry is still a certified public accountant, working out of our home.”

“I’d like to thank your girls for designing such a beautiful gown. I’m very grateful,” she complimented

“They did a great job,” I said before Amber went inside the offices of the Graphic Arts department to get prepared for her Introduction to Information Systems class.

During my fourth hour Planning and Coordination period, I went to the cafeteria to grab a salad and a glass of unsweetened iced tea. While I was looking at the bridal and fashion magazines, one of my students came into my office. Sheila Ledbetter, a sixteen-year-old high school junior taking my sixth hour Advanced Fashion Design II class and President of the Career Club, had something to tell me, as the faculty advisor for the same club.

“Mrs. Roberts, our guest speaker on careers in law enforcement had to pull out at the last minute,” Sheila informed me.

“What happened?” I asked her.

“Lieutenant Jimmy Kelvin had a death in his family. I got a call from his boss at the Islip Police half an hour ago,” she replied.

“Who in his family passed?”

“His nephew, Ernie, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan.”

I put in a call to a friend of mine at the New York Police Department, Lieutenant Jill Murray. “What’s on your mind, Erica?” she asked me.

“Jill, Lieutenant Jimmy Kelvin from Islip has had to pull out of our Career Club lecture on careers in law enforcement, scheduled for tomorrow. Would you like to fill in?” I asked her.

“My calendar is clear all day tomorrow,” she replied.

“Our group meets at eleven o’clock tomorrow morning in the campus Administration Building, Conference Room Three on the ground floor,” I added.

“I’ll be there; I’ll inform Captain Jarrett,” she told me.

As I was passing in the hallway on my way to teach my Intermediate Fashion Design I class, I saw Sheila in the hallway. “Who did you get to take Lieutenant Kelvin’s place?”

“I got Lieutenant Jill Murray of the New York Police Department to take his place,” I replied.

“I know Lieutenant Murray. She’s a good friend of my Aunt Stephanie. She’s in command of the all-female narcotics team known as the Lavender Team.”

“I understand she helped you get to this school.”

“When I was thirteen years old, I had a major role in a huge fight at a public school in Brooklyn. I tried to break up a fight between two girls, but wound up getting dragged into the fight. I had gotten into a lot of fights starting in the fourth grade, including several with the boys. By the time it was all over, I had given six boys and two girls their black eyes. I was taken

into the Twelfth Precinct, where I talked with Jill for several hours. Her friend, some guy named Conner, came into the office. He's a former Assistant D.A. in New York who's now Prosecuting Attorney for Nassau County. Jill told me about Rainbow; I came here the next day. Ironically, it was the same day my mother was arrested for badly beating her boyfriend. The court named Aunt Stephanie as my legal guardian; she took Jill's recommendation, and enrolled me at this school. This school has changed my life; I have more of an appreciation for the girl I am thanks to you and the other teachers I've had at Rainbow."

"I'm also good friends with Conner's wife, Shauna. She's now Chief of Detectives in Hempstead."

When I got to Room 17 in the Fine Arts building, my students were waiting for me. They were putting the final touches on the dresses for my daughters to wear to the wedding. "Even though my daughters are two years apart in age, many people can't tell them apart. This is why we're designing a fuchsia satin dress for Heather, who's five and a half years old, and a baby blue satin dress for Emily, who's three and a half. I'll be wearing the dress my students from last year's class designed when my sister-in-law, Holly, got married," I told my students.

"Do you have a picture of your daughters?" asked Laura, a fourteen-year-old high school freshman who had her gender reassignment surgery over the summer.

I put pictures of my daughters, placed on my laptop computer, on the screen. "No wonder it's hard to tell them apart," said Yolanda, a fifteen-year-old eighth grader who had become a ward of the court when her mother was sent to jail for a prostitution rap. "They look like twins," added Michele, a fourteen-year-old high school freshman who is transitioning from boy to girl. "These dresses are just

perfect for your girls,” Heather, a sixteen-year-old high school sophomore who is also a ward of the court, told me.

I also walked throughout the classroom, checking up on my students’ work. Heather was working on a pageant dress for Samantha Oliver’s eleven-year-old niece, who was entered in a pageant the following month in Vermont. She was being assisted by Alicia, a fourteen-year-old freshman from Boston who is transitioning from boy to girl. “I’ve shown her the proper way to sew a hem; she’s mastered this skill with plenty of practice,” Heather told me.

I examined the hem on the skirt of the dress. “Alicia, you’ve done a great job on the hem. I see you’re practicing on the seams of the dress,” I complimented.

“I’ve been practicing on the seams of my own dresses and skirts,” Alicia added.

“Keep working on the seams, Alicia. Heather, when you get to applying the lace trim to the dress, you may show her how it’s done,” I instructed them.

“Sure thing, Mrs. Roberts,” Heather told me.

I then walked over to another table, where Michele was working with Yolanda on a dress for Laura, the five-year-old niece of Samantha’s boyfriend, Stephen Steinkemp, an attorney in Suffolk County. “Let’s see what Mrs. Roberts thinks about the lace trim around the sleeves,” Michele told her.

“I think this is a great idea,” Yolanda added.

I examined the sleeves of the dress. “You’ve done a great job on the stitching for the sleeves. Next, sew the lace on the hem of the skirt,” I instructed.

“Yes, ma’am,” Yolanda informed me.

I then walked over to another table, where Heidi, a thirteen-year-old eighth grader from Germany who is transitioning from boy to girl, and Deanne, a fifteen-year-old high school freshman who is a ward of the court in Massachusetts, was working on a Southern Belle gown for Sheila Ledbetter's seven-year-old niece, Susan, the daughter of her older brother, Scott. "I've got to ask you something, Mrs. Roberts," Deanne told me.

"What is it, Deanne?" I asked her.

"Is this skirt big enough?" she asked me.

"Are you using the hoop skirt?" I then asked.

"Yes, we are," Heidi replied, picking up the skirt to show me that they were using the hoop skirt.

"Make sure that the skirt clings to the hoop skirt. Susan would really like to have this costume done by Halloween," I said.

My sixth hour class, Introduction to Fashion Marketing, met in Room 405 of the Fine Arts Building. My students, who were high school freshmen and sophomores, were watching video footage of the fashion shows from last year's New York Fashion Week. They critiqued the fashions from the shows and how they were presented; they handed their surveys to me when the class was finished. For my seventh hour class, Advanced Fashion Marketing, the juniors and seniors I taught were planning a fashion show for the students and staff for the next month.

After class, I co-facilitated the support group for the transgender high school juniors and seniors. John Tate from the English Department and Dr. Dianne Bryan, one of the counselors on campus, were the other facilitators of the group. When the girls sat down, I asked which one would like to start the group discussion. An eighteen-year-old high school senior named Andrea Benson raised her

hand. She's a native of Riverhead, six feet tall, has long blonde hair, slender build, and the only jewelry she wore was a pair of rhinestone stud earrings and a gold necklace with a diamond pendant. It's been four years since she had her gender surgically reassigned in San Francisco.

"What's on your mind, Andrea?" John asked her.

"I don't know how I should say this, but I'm testing the dating waters. I know I haven't been as interested in the guys as the other girls in this group, but after spending so much time on my studies, I feel I'm ready to try my hand at dating," she replied.

"Do you have any guys in mind?" I asked her.

"There's this one guy who is very interested in me. His name is Wesley Franklin; everyone insists on calling him Wes. He's also eighteen years old, and living in Syosset with his parents and younger sister. He graduated from high school this past spring, and he's attending a nearby community college. He knows about me and my past. His parents and sister also know about me and my past. We've been friends since high school; we met shortly after my operation," she explained.

"I've met Wes at some of our dances. He's a really nice guy; many of his friends have also come to our dances. There aren't that many guys who look on you as the girls we are now, and don't care about who and what we were in the past," Dianne added.

The next girl to speak was Georgette, a seventeen-year-old, brunette-haired high school junior from Germany, five-ten with a slender build who had her operation two summers ago. "I've dated a few of the guys, even though I haven't dated Wes. Dr. Bryan is right; there aren't that guys our age that really look on us as girls. I think Wes would be a good guy to ac-

cept a date with, Andrea,” she said with a slight hint of a German accent.

After Georgette spoke, an eighteen-year-old red-head named Traci Keller spoke. She’s a platinum blonde-haired girl, five-eight from Portsmouth, New Hampshire and had her operation this past summer in Montreal. “I dated him last summer, after I had my operation. He really understands girls like us,” she told us.

“What I’m hearing is that he’s very supportive of the girls here. Did he have any family members that went through transition and surgery?” I asked them.

Answering the question was Alix, an eighteen-year-old high school senior from Le Havre, France. She’s five-seven, athletic build, and had her operation in Philadelphia three summers ago. “I spent some time with Wes the fall after my operation. One of his cousins, Wendy Franklin, is a student at the Rainbow School for Girls in Baltimore. She’s a fourteen-year-old high school freshman who had her gender surgically reassigned in San Francisco over the summer. During her transition from boy to girl, she visited Wes and his sister, Karen, who’s a year older than Wendy, several times. On her first visit after beginning her new life as a girl, she toured our school. Her parents live in Annapolis, where both of her parents teach at the Naval Academy,” she replied with a hint of a French accent.

Adding to the commentary was Josie, a sixteen-year-old high school junior from Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania. She’s five-eleven with long black hair, athletic build and had her operation in Philadelphia two summers ago. “I’ve heard his story. In fact, I was in Philadelphia when Wendy had her operation; I showed her how to dilate her vagina. I think a date with him would be a good thing for you, Andrea,” she told her.

At the end of the group session, Andrea told the girls: "When he asks me out, I'm going to accept."

It was five-thirty when I got home from work. Harry was cooking a stir fry meal with beef, chicken and pork. Harry is six-five with a heavy build, light brown hair and wearing a red T-shirt, a pair of khaki slacks and a pair of loafers. He had just finished work for the day; he works from home as an accountant. "Something smells good, honey," I told him before giving him a kiss.

"It's the all-meat stir fry the girls really like," he whispered.

"How was your day?" I asked him.

"I spent all day on auditing the books of a law firm in Suffolk County. I can't believe the mess the firm got these books into. It's been a very busy day," he replied.

"I spent most of the day helping my students with the gowns for Karen Bodkin's wedding later this month. The dresses for the girls to wear to the wedding will be ready for the final fitting at the end of this week," I added.

The girls came in a few minutes later, when Harry called them for dinner. "How was your day at school?" I asked them.

"I learned how to make macramé in art class today; we even counted to 100 for the first time," Heather replied.

"We recited the alphabet three times in class, followed by counting to fifty," Emily added.

"Girls, the dresses I'm having my students make for Miss Bodkin's wedding will be ready for the final fitting by the end of the week," I informed them.

“I just hope we don’t overshadow Miss Bodkin on her wedding day,” Heather said.

“We won’t, Heather,” added Emily.

After dinner, I helped Harry with the dishes. We sat down to watch some old television shows when the phone rang. Harry picked it up. “Hello?” he asked. He listened for a moment before giving the phone to me.

“Erica Roberts,” I said into the receiver. It was one of my students, Stephanie Wayne, a seventeen-year-old high school senior from Harlem who was sent to our school by the juvenile court four years ago, after her parents were convicted of weapons charges in connection with a gun running ring to rebels in Mali. “We can’t seem to get this dress on Jessica,” she told me.

“Whose dress are you working on, and who are you working on it with?” I asked her.

“It’s a Homecoming dress for Jessica Brewer, a member of the Homecoming Court. I’m working on it with Madison Dever,” Stephanie replied.

When I got off the phone, Harry asked me: “Who was it, sweetie?”

“Stephanie Wayne, one of my Fashion Design students. She’s trying to get an initial fitting done for Jessica Brewer. I have to get to the school right away,” I replied.

“Be careful, sweetheart,” he whispered before we shared a kiss.

I arrived on campus around seven-thirty in the evening. I briskly walked to Room 19 of the Fine Arts Building, where Stephanie was waiting with Madison and Jessica. Stephanie is a five-three African-American girl with a slender build and small Afro; Madison

is a fifteen-year-old high school sophomore, five-seven with long medium brown hair. I was in Philadelphia two years ago to observe her gender re-assignment surgery. Jessica was on the pedestal in the middle of the room; the dress they were making for her was a bit tight. "What's the trouble?" I asked them.

"We're having a hard time getting the dress on her," Madison replied.

"Who measured her for the dress?" I then asked.

"Michaela Stephens and Brenda Leach," Stephanie replied.

I took a good look at the dress that was being made for Jessica, and made a simple observation. "The reason is that they made the waist a bit too small for her," I informed them.

"I measured her hips, and it came out to thirty-two inches. This was clearly made for a girl with thirty-inch hips. The waist was also an inch too small; she has a twenty-eight inch waist line, and this is made for a girl with a twenty-seven inch waist line," Madison added.

"Where are Michaela and Brenda?" I asked them.

"Michaela is back home in Burlington, Vermont; her Aunt Susan passed away this morning after a long battle with cancer," Madison replied.

"Brenda had a flashback this afternoon in her dorm room. She went to the clinic for observation," Stephanie added.

"Brenda hasn't completely recovered from post-traumatic stress disorder yet. She's been suffering from the disorder since her father sexually assaulted her when she was thirteen years old," Madison said with concern.

“Stephanie, I’ll tell you what; I’m going to give you and Madison the assignment of doing the alterations to the dress. You may stay after support groups tomorrow to work on the alterations. Jessica, you come back the day after tomorrow, after support groups, to make sure the fit is right,” I told them.

Just as I was leaving the classroom, Madison took me aside. “Mrs. Roberts, may I have a word with you?” she asked me.

“I’m all ears, Madison,” I replied.

“It’s about Brenda. I’ve known her since we were in the eighth grade. The courts in New York sent her here after she was diagnosed with PTSD. Her mother has been dead since she was twelve years old; she was murdered by a pimp after she turned in one of his prostitutes for attempting to offer sexual favors to Brenda’s older brother, Nathan. Less than a year later, her father brutally assaulted her sexually. She had numerous cuts and bruises and looked extremely disheveled when Nathan found her crying in her bed. She said her father assaulted her; he called the police. She lived with a maiden aunt in Bridgeport, Connecticut before the courts decided to send her here; she’s already testified against her father,” she explained.

“Is the trial over?” I asked her.

“Not quite. Closing arguments are scheduled for Friday; after that, the case is handed to the jury. They will be sequestered until a verdict is reached. If he is convicted, he faces up to life in a prison in up-state New York,” she replied.

“I have to tell you something about Michaela,” added Stephanie.

“What is it?” I asked her.

“She was very close to her Aunt Susan. She had her gender reassignment surgery in Montreal thirty years ago. Her aunt spent the first twenty-four years of her life as Gerald; she transitioned for two years before undergoing the operation. Michaela began life as Martin; she began living full-time as a girl when she was eleven years old. Her aunt, who had become a transgender rights activist, helped her during her transition from boy to girl. She accompanied her to Philadelphia three years ago when she had her operation. Her father is Susan’s older brother. The whole family was supportive when Susan transitioned from man to woman; it was the same way when Michaela was transitioning from boy to girl. Shortly after Michaela’s operation, Susan was stricken with cancer. She’s back home in Burlington for her funeral,” she explained.

“I’m going to have to give them another assignment when they get back,” I added.

“Michaela will be back on campus on Saturday. Her aunt will be laid to rest on Friday in Winooski. Brenda may have to return to Ridgeview Institute outside Atlanta for another evaluation,” Madison informed me.

“Was she hospitalized at Ridgeview before?” I asked them.

“She was hospitalized shortly after she was sexually assaulted. The social worker thought that Bellevue Hospital would be unsuitable for her, so her aunt helped pay for a ticket to Atlanta and a two-week stay at Ridgeview. She’s had several relapses since she came here two years ago,” Madison replied.

“Did you tell this to a counselor?” I then asked.

“We were with them when they told their stories to Dr. Bryan,” Stephanie replied.

Just as I was leaving the building so I could let Stephanie and Madison close up, I got a call on my cell phone. It was Monica Gregorian, an eighth grader and one of my Introduction to Fashion Marketing students. “Mrs. Roberts, I have an emergency in my dorm room,” she informed me.

“Sit tight, Monica; I’ll be right there,” I assured her.

I ran to Dormitory Number Four, where the seventh and eighth graders were housed. I arrived around eight-fifteen. Their room number was 4305, on the third floor. “What’s the trouble?” I asked Monica.

“It’s Pauline, one of my roommates. She passed out on her bed ten minutes ago. I’ve already called the nurse practitioner,” she replied.

Monica, five-six with her black hair done in a bob, slender build, and wearing a pair of pink sweat pants and a pink bodysuit, is transitioning from boy to girl. She came to our school from Atlantic City, where her family runs a restaurant. I took one good look at Pauline, a seventh grader, five-two with short blonde hair, a slender build and wearing a mauve nightgown, on the bed, looking somewhat ashen. She was holding her math book against her breasts; her notebook was off to the right side, with the last complex math problem of her assignment completed.

“What’s wrong?” Monica asked me.

“Her pulse and respiration are slower than normal. We’ll know more after the nurse practitioner examines her,” I replied.

The nurse practitioner, Kara Davis, arrived two minutes after I arrived. She had her bag with her. “Erica, I’m so glad you got here quickly,” she told me.

“I checked her pulse and respiration; they seem slower than normal,” I informed her.

“Is there anything in her history I should know about?” I asked her.

“Pauline was treated for a vitamin deficiency two years ago. She’s a ward of the court in Maine; her mother lost custody when she was sent to prison for trafficking cocaine across the border from Canada. Her father is living in New Zealand now; her parents divorced when she was eight years old,” Kara replied.

Kara went over to Pauline’s bed to check her blood pressure. Monica added more information. “She has two brothers, Paul and Richard. Paul is in a boarding school in California, while Richard is living with his father outside of Auckland. She also has an older sister, Rachelle, who attends college at Vassar. Since her father has enough to handle with Richard and a house full of foster children that he and his current wife, Kiri, have to watch over, they didn’t have enough room to accommodate her. The courts sent her to Rainbow as a result.”

Kara finished her examination five minutes later; she didn’t have a happy look on her face. “Erica, call an ambulance; Pauline needs immediate medical attention,” she told me.

“Could I use the phone in the room, Monica?” I asked her.

“You certainly may,” she replied before I called 911. After I got off the phone, I told Kara that the ambulance was on its way.

While we were waiting, I asked Kara about the vital signs. “Blood pressure is ninety over sixty, pulse and respiration slower than normal,” she replied.

Shortly before nine o’clock, the paramedics transferred Pauline from her bed to a stretcher. Kara would accompany Pauline to the hospital, while I followed in my Dodge Durango. When I entered the emergency room of a nearby hospital, Kara was pro-

viding the admitting nurse with Pauline's medical history. We waited for an hour for word on Pauline's condition. When the doctor came out of the ER ninety minutes later, he told us that Pauline's appendix had ruptured, and she needed to be operated on right away. Kara signed the forms authorizing surgery for Pauline. After Kara signed the forms, she and I made our way back to campus. I dropped her off Dormitory Number One, where the Health Service offices were. I finally came home around quarter to eleven. The girls were already in bed; Harry was still watching television.

"How did it go, babe?" he asked me.

"I was called to the school to help two students with a dress fitting. As it turned out, the dress turned out to be two inches too small around her hips and one inch too small around the waist line. The students who put this dress together were unable to see this to completion; one student had a death in her family, and another student had a flashback related to post-traumatic stress disorder," I replied.

"I heard you had a medical emergency to deal with after that."

"Pauline Wallace, who's in the seventh grade, passed out in her dorm room just as I was getting ready to return home. Monica Gregorian called me on my cell phone just as I was headed to the parking lot. I ran over to the dorm, and checked her out before Kara Davis arrived to do a more complete exam. Kara and I went to the hospital; Pauline is undergoing an emergency appendectomy as we speak."

"I put the girls to bed around quarter to eight; I returned to watching television. Around nine-fifteen, I made myself a bowl of popcorn. There's some left over in the kitchen."

I had the remainder of the bowl of popcorn while I was reading one of my fashion magazines. Harry and I would both watch the eleven o'clock news. I checked on the girls around eleven-fifteen; they were sound asleep. I came back in time to watch the sports and weather; the forecast for the next day was for a twenty percent chance of rain in the afternoon. Harry and I finally turned in around eleven-thirty. Harry would take the girls to school at seven-thirty the next morning; Heather was attending school in town, while Emily was attending a church-run pre-school. Another day would begin for me at six o'clock the next morning.

Jennifer Stephanie Miller, Department of Science

I came to the Rainbow School for Girls in Chicago to teach Atmospheric Sciences five years ago after teaching Environmental Science for eight years in the public school system in Kansas City, Kansas. I moved to Chicago so I could transition from man to woman. When I taught in Kansas City, I was known as James Stephen Miller. Everyone called me Jamie. When I began living full-time as a woman, I became known as Jenny. At six feet tall, I'm very tall and stunning for a woman. Three years ago, I took a summer to travel to Montreal for my gender reassignment surgery.

I was sharing an apartment on Chicago's North Side with two other transsexual women. Christina "Chrissy" Knowles is a well-known artist in the Chicago arts community; she started living as a woman while in art school. She had her gender reassignment surgery shortly after I arrived in Chicago. Candice "Candy" Green co-owns her own bridal salon in Evanston with her two sisters, Cecilia and Carla.



Candy is due for her operation next month in Philadelphia. I'm originally from Overland Park, Kansas; I've been fortunate to have the support of my family throughout my life, both as a man and a woman. I'm also fortunate to have a supportive boyfriend; Eric Bryant teaches English Literature on campus. He's six-three with an athletic build; we've been together for two and a half years. My teaching schedule included three sections of Meteorology, two sections of Astronomy and one section of Life Science. One class in Meteorology and the Life Science class for seventh and eighth grade students; the other classes are for the high school students.

It was the middle of April, on the first Friday after my students returned from Spring Break. I had spent my Spring Break touring the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma and the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida with a group of my students. Eric's students were attending a Shakespeare festival at the Rainbow campus in Seattle. The school was within walking distance of my apartment. I woke up around quarter to seven, taking a shower and getting into my paisley print dress and blue sneakers. Around seven o'clock, I made myself a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice. Candy had just woken up, while Chrissy was still fast asleep when I left the apartment at five minutes after seven. Fifteen minutes later, I was in my office in the Science and Mathematics building on the campus, which has a view of the Chicago skyline. The school's Headmistress, Sandra Doran, knocked on my door as I was getting my materials together for my first three classes.

"May I have a word with you, Jenny?" she asked me.

"Sure thing, Sandi," I replied.

"Are you and Eric doing anything three weeks from tomorrow tonight?"

“We don’t have anything planned.”

“I wonder if you two would like to help out at the Prom.”

“I’ll have to talk about this with him; I’ll let you know by the end of the day.”

“I understand you two have a date tonight.”

“He’s been planning this date in his sleep since Christmas.”

“Tell me how the date turns out.”

After Sandi left the office, I put my teaching materials inside my backpack, and made my way to Room 112 on the first floor to teach one of my high school Astronomy sections. This class, mainly of high school freshmen and sophomores, with a few juniors and one high school senior mixed in, was broken up into five groups of four to discuss the atmosphere of a given planet. Group One was studying the atmosphere of Mercury. Group Two studied the atmosphere of Mars, Group Three was studying Jupiter; Group Four was studying Neptune, while Group Five was studying Earth. I have thirteen transgender girls in this class, along with seven troubled girls. I checked over the notes that four of the groups had gathered, before I went over to Group Five to see what notes they had collected about our own planet.

“Miss Miller, I have a question,” said Lara Banning, the only high school senior in the class, and a ward of the court in her home state of Michigan.

“What would you like to ask, Lara?” I asked her.

“Would it be a good idea to include data on the hole in the ozone layer?” she asked.

“I think that would be a good idea,” I replied.

“What do you think about the introductory page in the Power Point presentation?” asked Gina Iovanni, a freshman and a ward of the court in Ohio.

“That’s excellent, Gina,” I replied with a smile.

“There’s a conflict with the two Web sites I’m using to get information on the land area of the earth. One site has one figure, while another site has a completely different figure,” said Vanessa Ohrman, a sophomore who was in the final stage of her transition from boy to girl.

“Which Web sites are you using?” I asked.

“Vanessa is using a commercial Web site, while I’m using information from a university Web site,” replied Janet Martin, a freshman who went through gender reassignment surgery last summer.

“The university Web site is more accurate than a commercial Web site. You may also use government Web sites to get that information,” I added.

“Thanks for the tip, Miss Miller,” added Vanessa.

The second hour class was the middle school level Life Science course. This class has eleven troubled girls and nine transgender girls in the course. The students turned in their reports on the field trip I took my class on to the forest preserve on the northwest side of Chicago, before one enters Niles. Their assignment was to observe the various plant and animal species seen in the forest preserve. Third hour was high school level Meteorology; this class, for the juniors and seniors, has four troubled girls and sixteen transgender girls. We discussed the accuracy of the forecasts given by the meteorologists for the local television stations.

“Miss Miller, I have, as an example, the forecasts that I took from each of Wednesday’s late night news-

casts,” said Melissa Fulton, a high school junior who’s a ward of the court in Wisconsin.

“What did you find out, as far as accuracy was concerned?” I asked her.

“At nine o’clock, one station predicted a high at the Lakefront on Thursday of sixty-two degrees, while the other station predicted a high of sixty. At ten o’clock, one station forecast a high of sixty-four at the Lakefront; the second station forecast a high of sixty-one, while the third station forecast a high of sixty-two. The high on Thursday was sixty-six degrees. The first station with a nine o’clock newscast came closest, being off by four degrees. The first station with a ten o’clock newscast came closest in this case, being off by just two degrees. The second station in my survey of ten o’clock newscasts even has a five-degree guarantee; if they get within five degrees of the forecast high for that day, they give away an umbrella. The forecast was within five degrees; a lucky viewer in Hoffman Estates won the umbrella,” she explained.

“What about low temperature accuracy?” asked Ivy Ann Sheldon, a high school junior and honor student who had gender reassignment surgery before starting her freshman year of high school.

“At nine o’clock, one station forecast a low of thirty-eight degrees, while another forecast a low of forty degrees. At ten o’clock, the first station predicted a low of forty-one; the second station predicted thirty-nine degrees for the low temperature, while the third station predicted that the temperature would fall to thirty-six. The low temperature at the Lakefront on Thursday morning was forty-two degrees. The second station at nine o’clock came closest; the actual low was two degrees higher than predicted. At ten o’clock, the first station was closest, with the ac-

tual low temperature one degree higher than the forecast,” Melissa explained.

“What was the average deviation?” I asked her.

“For the high temperature on Thursday, the average deviation was four point two degrees from the forecast to the actual high. The low temperature had an average deviation of three point two degrees from the forecast to the actual low temperature,” she replied.

Fourth hour was my planning period; from eleven o'clock to quarter to twelve, I worked on my lesson plans for Monday through Wednesday of the following week. At twenty minutes before twelve, one of my colleagues knocked on the door. “Jenny?” she asked me. I turned around to find out it was Heather Martin, the lab supervisor. She's five feet tall, with short brunette hair and an average build; she was wearing a mauve pantsuit and white high heels.

“What's on your mind, Heather?” I asked her.

“I was wondering if you would join me for lunch,” she replied.

“I'll be with you in a few minutes,” I added before she sat down on a chair in my office. When I finished with the lesson plan for Wednesday, I went to the cafeteria with Heather. I got myself a Caesar salad and a glass of unsweetened iced tea, while Heather got a plate of spaghetti, a small garden salad and a glass of unsweetened iced tea. We found a table in the cafeteria, near where a bunch of high school girls were sitting.

“What's going on between you and Eric?” she asked me.

“We have a date set for tonight. He's planning to take me to one of the most romantic restaurants in

Chicago; it's a date he's been planning since Christmas," I replied.

"Eric's been keeping his plans under wraps. He's not telling anyone what he plans to do, not even his male colleagues. He wants it to be a surprise."

"We've been together for quite some time; when we met, he had just come to Rainbow from a part-time assignment at Northwestern University in Evanston. He had not been in a relationship for nearly twenty years; he still had some unresolved anger about the way his last relationship ended. I made him forget the girl who so messed up his life all those years ago. When we became a couple, I told him that I was born a boy. I was happy when he told me he was attracted to the woman I have become. In recent months, we've been talking about the possibility of spending the rest of our lives together."

"I remember when I met my husband. I was fresh out of college, and just started teaching seventh and eighth grade science classes in Joliet. Jim had just ended his radio career after eighteen years, and was working as a clerk for a stock broker there. He's not much taller than I am; he's only five-four with an athletic build. We were able to let our love bridge a seventeen-year age gap. When we met, I was twenty-two and he was Jack Benny's favorite number of thirty-nine. We both like the older television shows; we're not that crazy about the current television shows. He courted me for three years before he popped the question. Jim planned the moment for three months before he went through with it. We got married shortly after my twenty-sixth birthday; in the twenty years we've been married, we've been blessed with three sons, Jimmy, Lance and Kevin, and our daughter, Bethany. We moved to Winnetka nine years ago when Jim set up his brokerage office. Six years ago, I left the Joliet school system to join the staff here at Rainbow. Jimmy is now a senior in

high school, while Bethany is now a sophomore, Lance is now in seventh grade, and Kevin is in third grade. Jim and I really enjoy the time we spend together.”

“You two are lucky your families live close by.”

“My parents still live in Joliet; they just celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. All but one of my siblings lives in the Chicago area; my older brother lives in Valparaiso, Indiana. Jim’s parents, who are both past ninety, celebrated seventy years of marriage over Thanksgiving weekend. His older brother and sister live within blocks of each other in Wilmette; his twin sister, Jolene, lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico.”

“Most of my family still lives in the Kansas City area; I have a younger sister living in the Chicago area. Eric’s family is evenly split between St. Louis, Chicago and Champaign. His youngest sister, Taylor, teaches feminine deportment and gymnastics at the Rainbow campus in northern Jefferson County, near St. Louis.”

Fifth hour was my second high school Meteorology section; this class is primarily for the freshman and sophomore classes. The class was evenly split: ten troubled girls and ten transgender girls. The discussion was around the different types of severe storms, and the different weather warnings. I would be teaching Meteorology to seventh and eighth graders during sixth hour; this class has eleven transgender and nine troubled girls. I handed back their reports on the different types of winds and the damage they do. The girls and I saw a movie on the tornado outbreak in the spring of 1974. They took notes during the movie; I gave them a take-home quiz that they would turn in the following Monday. I would be teaching the Meteorology class for high school honor students during seventh hour; honors classes only have ten

students. Eight were transgender girls, and two were troubled girls. In class, we saw a video on Hurricane Katrina; I had the students take notes on the film. I also gave my students an essay to write on one destructive tornado, which they would turn in the following Tuesday.

I returned to my office around five minutes before four o'clock, packing all my books and teaching materials in my backpack before heading to Conference Room 12 in the Administration Building for support groups. I am a co-facilitator of one of the support groups for the troubled high school freshmen and sophomores. The lead facilitator, Dr. Judy Barnes, is a former parole officer for the State of Wisconsin. She's five-seven, slender build with shoulder-length red hair; she was wearing a white pantsuit and white flats that day. The other facilitator, Heath Stedman, is six-eight with an athletic build and wearing a navy blue button-down shirt, khaki pants and a pair of white-and-blue athletic shoes. The question we posed to the group: "How has being around transgender classmates and/or roommates changed you?"

One answer that stuck in my mind came from Elaine Larsen, a fifteen-year-old freshman and former juvenile delinquent who served time in juvenile detention in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "Before the courts sent me to Rainbow, I didn't know the meaning of the words 'transgender' and 'transsexual.' Of course, I've heard about the famous people who have been through the transition from one gender to another, regardless of whether it's from guy to girl, or girl to guy.

When I came here last August, I met a nice girl named Crystal Anderson. She had just been through the operation that completed her transition from boy to girl. She had just transferred to this campus from the one in Casper, Wyoming; her father's job brought

her and her family to Chicago. When we moved into our dorm room, I told her the story about how I got to this point in my life; especially my being abused by my father, and my mother being involved in the illegal drug trade. I was a very aggressive tomboy; I landed in juvenile detention last year for beating two boys in front of the studios of a local radio station. After serving three months, the courts took me away from my mother, and placed me at Rainbow. Crystal has taught me a lot about being a girl; I have a stronger sense of femininity now than I did at this time last year.

One thing I've learned is that transgender girls are generally more feminine than girls who were actually born female, like me. Crystal and I share our room with two other girls; one is a troubled girl from Canton, Missouri, the other a transsexual girl from Marquette, Michigan who had her gender surgically reassigned last summer. If there's one thing that's changed, thanks to having a transsexual roommate and being in class with transgender students," she explained.

Fourteen-year-old freshman Renee Falla, who was removed from abusive parents by a judge in Owensboro, Kentucky, described her experience this way: "I used to think of boys who prefer dressing as girls as being 'weird' or 'queer'. Both of my parents are lushes; they were violent toward me, my brothers and a special needs sister. They never even met a transgender person. I'm very thankful for the judge who removed me from my parents, and placed me here at Rainbow. My mind really opened up once I arrived here in August. I was introduced to Nancy LaPierre, who's now my roommate and best friend. She had been through gender reassignment surgery in San Francisco two months before; she pointed out my flaws, and helped me become more of a proper girl. We share our room with two other transsexual

girls; one from Decatur, Illinois and the other from South Bend, Indiana. I even spent Christmas with Nancy's family in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. They were very nice to me. This experience has really opened me up to new ideas that I never thought I would be exposed to."

After the group therapy sessions, I grabbed my backpack, locked the door to my office, and walked home to my apartment. Candy was at work when I walked in at five minutes after five o'clock; Chrissy was finishing a painting in her bedroom. "You must have had a late night last night," I said to her.

"You're not kidding. I didn't come home until twelve-thirty this morning," Chrissy added.

"What are your plans this evening?"

"I'm going to an art show at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb this evening. The show is at eight o'clock; I have to get to Union Station to catch the six-fifteen train to DeKalb."

"I've got a date with Eric this evening. He's got a surprise for me."

Chrissy then set aside a red sequin dress on her bed, along with red lingerie, white stockings and red high heels before walking into her shower. I went into my room to select my black satin dress, matching lingerie, stockings and flats before I took a quick shower to freshen up for my date with Eric. After I got dressed, Chrissy was already in her outfit, and had just gotten off the phone.

"What time does Eric pick you up?" she asked me.

"He'll be here at six o'clock," I replied.

"A taxicab will be here in a few minutes to take me to the station," she added.

When the taxicab arrived around quarter to six, Chrissy walked out the door, and walked from our first floor apartment; she got into the vehicle, and left for Union Station about fifteen seconds later. I had a few minutes to relax in the living room. The doorbell to the apartment rang around six o'clock. When I opened it, Eric was there; he was holding a box from a florist.

"For you, darling," he said softly.

"Thank you, honey!" I exclaimed with excitement. The box contained a dozen roses. I discovered that Chrissy left a vase full of water on the table to put the roses in. After putting my roses in the water, I closed the curtains and locked the door to the apartment. As it turned out, Eric had just purchased a new car. During Spring Break, he bought a brand new Lincoln MKZ.

It would take fifteen minutes to get from the apartment to the John Hancock Center, where Eric made reservations at the restaurant on the ninety-sixth floor. He was looking handsome in his black pin-stripe suit, matching tie, socks and wing-tip shoes. We were holding hands all the way from the parking lot to the elevator. I took his arm when we arrived at the restaurant. A hostess was awaiting our arrival; she looked very familiar. Eric immediately noticed her; Natalie Stone graduated from Rainbow last spring; she came to us as a seventh grader who was removed from an abusive situation in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Her parents are serving time in Wisconsin prisons for their involvement in a drug ring. She is working at the restaurant while studying to be a social worker at Loyola. She immediately noticed us.

"Mr. Bryant, Miss Miller; what a pleasant surprise!" she said with a huge smile.

"How are you, Natalie?" Eric asked her.

“I’m doing great. I’m now in an apartment with two other graduates from Rainbow; Johanna Smith is now at Northwestern, studying secondary education, while Gwendolyn Chan is with me at Loyola, also studying social work,” she replied.

“It’s great that you’re doing well, especially after what you’ve been through,” I added.

“I’ll show you to your table,” Natalie informed us before showing us to a table with a view of Lake Michigan. She gave us two menus to order our dinner. Eric ordered a steak dinner with baked potato and garden salad for both of us. He also ordered a bottle of champagne. When we had our champagne delivered and poured by a waiter, I started the conversation.

“I just remembered that this is the table we sat at when you took me to this place the first time,” I said to him.

“Yes, I remember that very well. It was our first date after we officially became a couple. I still remember the beautiful yellow chiffon dress you wore and the sweet smell of your perfume,” he said quietly.

“Did you get a visit from Sandi today?” I then asked him.

“I did get a visit from her, the hour after she visited you. She asked if we could help out at the Prom. She thought it would be best if we discussed this before we give her our answer,” he replied.

“I would be glad to do it,” I added.

“If you want to do it, I’m in,” he told me before I called Sandi on my cell phone. She was at home with her husband and three daughters when I told her Eric and I would help out at the Prom.

“This will give me a chance to wear my strapless pink ball gown,” I told him.

“It’s been a while since I wore my silver tuxedo,” he added.

After we had our dinner, we walked over to Navy Pier. We were holding hands as we walked toward the end of the pier. We found a spot where we would face the lake. We were gently holding each other as we looked each other in our eyes.

“This was the spot where we shared our first kiss when we were on our first date. I knew, right then and on this spot, you are the girl for me. It never mattered to me whether you were born male or female; I fell in love with the beautiful woman you are now. I’m thankful that we’re both teaching at Rainbow; if it hadn’t been for accepting my present assignment, I probably would have never been this deeply in love with a woman as I am with you,” he said softly.

“I remember when we kissed for the first time. I never felt more feminine than I did at that moment. All of my life, even before I began living full-time as a woman, I dreamed of falling in love with a handsome man. You give me a warm and fuzzy feeling; no other man has ever given me such a feeling. Eric, you’re the man for me, and I want to hold on to you forever,” I whispered to him.

We broke our embrace so he could get down on one knee. Once he was down on one knee, he reached into his suit jacket to reach for a red felt-lined jewelry box. He opened it to reveal a beautiful ring with a half-karat diamond. “Jenny, will you be my wife?” he asked me.

I was completely surprised by his proposal. I was in awe at the beauty of the engagement ring he was about to give me. I shed a tear of joy before I replied:

“Yes, Eric, yes! I would be honored and proud to be your wife.”

He took it out of the box, and slipped the ring on the ring finger of my left hand. He got back up on his feet after he put the ring on my finger; we took each other in our arms. “I love you, in this moment and for all time, Jenny,” he whispered.

“I love you, Eric, now and forever,” I cooed before we engaged in a deep, tender kiss. We kissed for several minutes before we broke our kiss and embrace. I took time to admire my ring before he took my hand, and made the walk back to his car. We would then go to see a romantic comedy at a movie theater in the northern suburbs. We didn’t get back to the apartment until almost midnight.

When I came into the apartment, Candy was home and in her baby blue nightgown. “What did he say?” she asked me.

“Eric said ‘yes!’” I exclaimed with joy.

“I’m so happy for you, Jenny!” she exclaimed with equal joy.

I showed Candy the ring he gave me. “It’s a very beautiful ring!” she happily said.

It was five minutes after midnight when Chrissy walked in the door. “How was the art show?” Candy asked her.

“It was fantastic! Two of my paintings were displayed tonight,” Chrissy replied.

“Are they in the University’s collection?” I asked her.

“I donated them to the University a year and a half ago,” she replied.

“Jenny has some great news to share, Chrissy,” Candy told her.

“What is it?” she asked me.

“Eric popped the question tonight; I said ‘yes!’” I excitedly replied before showing her the ring he gave me.

“I’m so happy for you!” Chrissy said with a smile.

“How would you like to fit me for my wedding gown?” I asked Candy.

“It would be an honor to fit you for your wedding gown,” Candy replied.

I finally took off my dress, shoes and lingerie, and changed into a lavender teddy and a matching chenille robe. I sat up with Candy looking over the bridal magazines until nearly two o’clock in the morning. Chrissy changed into a red baby doll nightie; she went to bed at twelve-thirty.

The both of us relaxed that weekend before we returned to work the following Monday morning, when we told our colleagues about our engagement. Our students were also very happy for us. Eric and I would be writing the next chapter of our professional and personal lives together.

Jerald Stephen Bryan, Department of Social Studies

For the past nine years, I have been teaching at the Rainbow School for Girls’ home campus in San Francisco. I grew up in a small town called Susanville, California; I got my teaching degree at the University of Oregon, and got Master’s degrees in Social Work and American Government from Stanford. I began

my career teaching in the public school system in Oakland; I taught there for eleven years before I got a better offer from Rainbow. I met my wife, the former Elizabeth Stanley, then a first-year Life Science teacher, when I started at Rainbow. Like me, she grew up in a small town; she came to San Francisco from Salem, Indiana.

The campus overlooks the Pacific Ocean, not far from San Francisco International Airport. Elizabeth and I commute to the campus from Half Moon Bay, where we live with our son, Johnny, now seven years old and in the first grade, and our daughter, Edie, now four years old and in preschool. When we arrived on campus at seven-thirty in the morning, we went straight to our offices. Mine is in the Social Science building on the ground floor, while Elizabeth's was in the Science and Math building on the first floor, next to the Biology Lab.

It was a cool and brisk morning after we returned from our holiday break in early January. We started a new semester; I would be teaching one section each of seventh and eighth grade Social Studies, two sections of American Government and two sections of America in the Twentieth Century. My planning period would be fifth hour this time around; last semester, it was during first hour. Elizabeth would also have her planning period at fifth hour; she had hers during fourth hour last semester.

It was eight o'clock in the morning when I began my first class, one of my sections of American Government, with twenty of the girls from the junior and senior classes. The class was in Room 508 in the Social Science building. I began by calling the roll, handing out copies of the course syllabus, and getting familiar with my students. The majority of the students in my class were troubled girls who were removed from abusive home situations. They were familiar with some of the dealings of the judicial

branch of our government. One of my transgender students has connections in the legislative branch of government.

“My name is Laura Carlos; I’m a sixteen-year-old junior at Rainbow. My father is a California Assemblyman who represents my hometown of Davis. He has long been an advocate for transgender rights. He became an advocate when I began my transition from boy to girl four years ago. He has met with members of the transgender community, not only in Sacramento, but throughout California. He has fought hard for stronger transgender rights laws here in California over the ten years he has served in Sacramento,” she explained.

“I’ve heard your father speak on the subject here at Rainbow a year ago,” I told her before I faced the class. “Her father is Assemblyman Lorenzo ‘Larry’ Carlos. He’s spoken not only at this campus, but also at Rainbow’s campus in Los Angeles. Many of you have dealt with the judicial branch where you live; Laura’s dad is one of those who work tirelessly for the transgender community here in California. He’s scheduled to speak to this class at our campus before Spring Break,” I added.

In that first hour class, the count was fourteen girls from troubled backgrounds and six transgender girls. The troubled girls gave the whole class their accounts of dealing with the judicial branch of the government. Toward the end of the class, one student’s account sticks out in my mind.

“I’m Margaret Dillon; I’m seventeen years old, and a senior here at Rainbow. My first dealing with the judicial branch happened in my hometown of Elko, Nevada when I was twelve years old. I was caught fighting with a thirteen-year-old girl in the downtown area. My father was a junkie; he was trying to kick a cocaine habit. My mother worked for local govern-

ment in Elko; she was sent to prison when I was thirteen years old for embezzling \$130,000 from local government for personal expenses and paying for my father's treatment. After my mother was sent to prison, the court determined that my father could not care for me or my older brother, Andrew, because of his drug addiction. I was sent to Rainbow; Andrew was sent to a boarding school outside Las Vegas. I have the courts in Nevada to thank for my being here in San Francisco," she explained.

Judy Milton, another troubled student, added: "I'm now eighteen, and everyone in this class, at one time or another, have dealt with the judicial branch of government. Most of us had to deal with the courts when we have a terrible home situation or wanting to get out of that situation. Some of us in this school have dealt with the courts when it comes to changing their names. The transgender students have been to court to have their names legally changed to reflect their transition from boys to girls. Two years ago, I had to deal with the courts in San Luis Obispo County when my parents were picked up in Atascadero for transporting drugs; they found a methamphetamine lab at their home south of Paso Robles. Before my parents went on trial, I was made a ward of the court, along with my younger sister, Jayne and her twin brother, Wayne. Jayne is now an eighth grader here at Rainbow, while Wayne is attending a boarding school in Palm Springs."

When the bell rang at ten minutes before nine, I moved next door to Room 506 for eighth grade Social Studies. Elizabeth had the classroom I was in for first hour for her Introduction to Human Biology class. "Do you have a minute?" she asked as I was sitting at the desk.

"What's on your mind, Liz?" I asked her.

“I have a girl in my class who has been dealing with a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder. She has just returned to class after missing last semester,” she replied.

“Are you talking about Olivia Donald?” I then asked.

“That’s who I’m talking about. She’s in my eighth grade Biology class at fourth hour. She was gang-raped when she was eleven years old by a group of boys who roughed up business owners for protection payments. Her father owned a restaurant just three blocks from Chinatown. Her parents moved their restaurant to Santa Rosa a year and a half ago. Olivia could not make it in a traditional school environment after that experience; she started at this school last year.” she replied.

“I have her in this class; I’ve been made aware of her history. I’m sure she’s going to have a difficult time catching up with her peers,” I added.

“That’s an understatement. Her counselor has recommended that she stay for summer school,” she told me.

“Could we talk more about this at lunch?” I asked her.

“I’ll see you at lunch,” she replied before leaving for the classroom next door.

Olivia looked very calm as she sat down in the front row shortly before nine o’clock. She was sitting between her two best friends, Hazel Stephens, another troubled girl, and Vicki Florence, a pre-operative transsexual. “If you have any trouble, we’ll be here,” Vicki assured her.

“I’ll be here for you, too, Olivia,” Hazel added.

At nine o'clock, I began my lecture. "Girls, today's subject is on the agencies of our local government. There are so many different divisions of local government. Whether your local government is the city or county government, they provide many services for its residents. For example, I live in Half Moon Bay. Let's take where we are right now; the City and County of San Francisco," I explained, before I asked them: "What kind of government services would you expect to see in San Francisco?"

"The first one that comes to mind is the Health Department," Hazel replied.

"Now, what does the Health Department do?" I asked them.

"One of the things they do is inspecting restaurants to comply with sanitary regulations," Olivia replied.

"As we enter the cafeteria for our meals, we see a sticker with a grade on it. The best grade a restaurant gets is 'Grade A', just like getting an 'A' in our classes. The grades are based on compliance with sanitary and health regulations," added Vicki.

"Another function of the Health Department is the operation of the city's hospitals, like Harbor Hospital, where my sister works as a nurse," said Hillary Martin, another troubled girl and a ward of the court.

"My brother is a paramedic in San Francisco; the Health Department is also in charge of the paramedic units," added Edie Porter, a pre-op transsexual.

The discussion on the functions of the Health Department went on for fifteen minutes before Olivia said: "Another service of our government is the Police Department."

“The primary function of the Police Department is to protect the citizens of this city and enforce the laws of the city, county and state,” added Vicki.

“They have the power to arrest people if the law is broken,” Gloria Holman, a troubled girl who was sent to this school by her aunt, told the class.

“Even though I’ve heard a lot of stories about police brutality and racial profiling, I have had nothing but good relations with the police, whether it’s in San Francisco or in Medford, Oregon, where I’m from,” Karen Benson, a pre-op transsexual, told us.

We had a discussion of the other functions of local government until quarter to ten, when I gave them their assignment. “In your textbooks, please read Chapter One; it will explain the material we discussed today in more detail. Answer the questions at the end of the chapter; the assignment is due tomorrow at the end of class,” I informed them before I asked the students if they had any questions. When they had no questions, they put their course materials in their backpacks before the bell rang.

My third hour class on America in the Twentieth Century would be in Room 102 on the first floor, the first room on the left after coming in from the lobby. The lecture in this class dealt with the Presidential election of 1900 and the assassination of President McKinley in 1901. Fourth hour was the seventh grade Social Studies class; this was the class that has a lunch break. Elizabeth has her eighth grade Biology class; both of our classes had the first lunch break at eleven o’clock. We met up for lunch; she chose a ham sandwich with Swiss cheese, a cup of orange yogurt and a medium cup of lemon-lime soda, while I chose a plate of chicken fried rice and a large cup of unsweetened iced tea.

We sat down at a table for two in a secluded corner of the cafeteria, away from most of the students. “How was Olivia in your class?” Elizabeth asked me.

“She was very calm in my eighth grade Social Studies class today. She even contributed to the discussion on government services. It looks like she didn’t show any signs of the PTSD that kept her out of class last semester,” I replied.

“That’s good to hear. I hope she is calm in my class today.”

“I’ve dealt with a number of girls who have been dealing with PTSD in the nine years we’ve been here. I dealt with a handful of these cases when I was teaching high school in Oakland. Many of the cases I’ve dealt with have been due to abuse from one or both parents, but some of them have been crime victims. Olivia falls into the latter category. Eight boys, ranging in age from twelve to eighteen, committed the crime against her three years ago. Four of the boys were sent to the School of Industry run by the penal system; the other two were tried as adults.”

“What became of the two tried as adults?”

“They were both convicted of assault and forcible rape; one of them got the maximum sentence allowed by law. He’s serving his sentence at San Quentin. The second one is awaiting sentencing; he could get sent to either San Quentin, Folsom or even south to Chino.”

Elizabeth changed the subject. “What are we going to do tonight?” she asked me.

“How about we take the kids out for pizza, and then go to the family fun center?” I then asked.

“That sounds like a good plan. We haven’t taken the kids out since their Spring Break,” she replied.

“We’ll pick up the kids around five-thirty,” I added.

After we parted with a kiss, I walked to Room 401 on the fourth floor, where I would teach my seventh grade Social Studies class. I began my lecture by introducing myself to the class. “Girls, I’m Mr. Bryan, and I’ll be your instructor for seventh grade Social Studies. I’ve been at the Rainbow School for Girls for nine years; before that, I taught across the bay in Oakland. If you have Mrs. Bryan for any science courses, this is extra good; she’s my better half. This semester, the discussions will center around culture around the world, with emphasis on the New World. I hope that you will have a more complete understanding of the different cultures of the world when this semester is over at the end of May.”

Seventeen of my twenty students in the fourth hour class were pre-op transsexuals who had just started living full-time as girls over the summer; the other three were troubled girls removed from abusive home environments by the courts. Our class discussions revolved around our own culture in North America. I assigned a one-page paper on the hometowns of my students; the papers would be due at the end of class the next day. Once class was dismissed at ten minutes to one, I went straight over to my office to plan the next day’s course discussions.

While I was preparing the reading and homework assignments for my second hour class, the school’s Headmistress, Amanda Jones, a petite woman in her late thirties with long blonde hair, knocked on my door.

“May I have a word with you, Jerry?” she asked me.

“Come in, Amanda,” I replied.

“One of our high school students and Jackie Avildsen are taking part in a mile and a half walk for

breast cancer research next month in Golden Gate Park. I've been asked to see if anyone on our faculty could chip in a little bit for their walk."

I took a look at their pledge sheets before I called Elizabeth in her office. "Liz Bryan," she said as she answered the phone.

"Liz, it's Jerry; Amanda Jones is here. She's taking pledges for a student and Jackie's walks for breast cancer research," I informed her before asking how much we should contribute.

"How does seventy-five dollars sound?" she asked me.

I checked our checkbook before telling her: "Seventy-five dollars is fine with me." After I hung up the phone, I wrote a check for seventy-five dollars, and gave it to Amanda.

"Thank you for your contribution, Jerry," she said gratefully.

"Liz and I have both been affected by breast cancer; both her mother and my aunt are breast cancer survivors," I added.

"I've lost an older sister to breast cancer. Jackie has lost a cousin to the disease; the student participating, Callie Sadler, a senior who transitioned from boy to girl three years ago, lost her grandmother and her aunt to breast cancer," Amanda added before she walked out of my office.

My second section of American Government was at sixth hour; the discussion was the same as the first section of the class. This class was held in Room 26 on the ground floor. The last class of the day was the second section of America in the Twentieth Century, with the same lecture as the first section. When the seventh hour class ended at ten minutes to four o'clock, I was on my way to my office to drop off my

books before heading to a conference room on the ground floor of the Administration Building when I encountered a girl sitting on a chair in the lobby of the Social Science building, crying her heart out. Edie Porter approached me to tell me what's going on.

"Mr. Bryan, Margaret Agosti just got a text from her sister in Reno. Their parents have just disowned her; she's really in tears," Edie informed me.

"How come she's crying?" I asked her.

"She turned her parents into the local cops on New Year's Eve. She and her sister, Michelle, saw both of them beat our special needs sister, Lori, after she exposed herself in our front yard. The beating disgusted her more than anyone else; so much so, she called the police. They spent nearly a week in jail; Margaret refused to drop the charges, despite pressure from their parents," she replied.

I got on my cell phone, and called Phyllis Bacon, the lead facilitator of the support group I'm a co-facilitator for. "Phyllis, I'm going to be a few minutes late. I have a troubled student in the Social Science building; she's been deeply troubled by a text she received from her sister. Edie Porter and I are going to take her to the Counseling Center," I explained.

Edie and I took Margaret to her counselor, Dr. Lorraine Cole. When we arrived at her office, I told her: "Margaret received a disturbing text from her sister."

Lorraine grabbed the cell phone, and saw the text. "Disowned by her parents...for doing the right thing? I'm very shocked at this," she said with complete shock.

"She sent her parents to jail for beating her special needs sister," Edie added.

“I’m going to have to call our legal advisor, Keith Collins, and get the paperwork going on making her a ward of the court,” Lorraine informed us.

“Margaret, you’re in good hands. I have to get to my support group. I’ll see you after the group meeting,” Edie assured her.

“I’m also late for the support group I’m co-facilitating,” I added before leaving her office.

“I’ll call her group leader,” Lorraine informed me.

The support group I am the co-facilitator for is one of the support groups for the transgender high school juniors and seniors. I arrived at Conference Room 11 on the ground floor of the Administration Building around five minutes after four.

“Mr. Bryan, we’re so glad you made it,” Phyllis said to me.

I immediately sat down next to the third co-facilitator, Nora Portman from the Fashion Design department. She went through her gender reassignment surgery six years ago in Montreal. “What happened that delayed you?” asked a concerned Nora.

“I had to deal with a deeply disturbed student. One of my middle school students helped me get her to the Counseling Center,” I replied.

When I arrived, Frances Kelly, a high school senior, was talking about helping a seventh grader with her transition. “I see so much of myself in Sally. I was in her shoes five years ago, when I came here from San Mateo. My parents took a therapist’s recommendation by having me enroll at Rainbow so I could transition from Frederick to Frances in a safe environment. Sally’s parents felt the same way my parents did when she told them she wanted to be Sally, not Seth, the person she spent the first twelve years of her life as. Like my parents, her parents felt that

she would have a better time transitioning here at Rainbow than at a public school in her hometown of Klamath Falls, Oregon. She hopes to be a therapist one day, like I want to be. Her counselor feels that I would be the best mentor for her, since I've been through what she is about to go through," she told the group.

Karen Ewing, a high school junior, joined the conversation. "When I came to this school, I was also a seventh grader. My parents divorced when I was five years old. When I told my mother, who owns a bridal salon with my two aunts, that I wanted to become a girl, she was very supportive. My mother heard nothing but good things about this school from our therapist. When I arrived, Grace O'Neal took me under her wing. She was a sophomore then; she had been through the same thing I was about to go through when she was in seventh grade. Grace imparted her wisdom on me. She told me about her supportive family, her dreams for herself and her hope for the transgender community around the world. When I had my gender surgically reassigned here in San Francisco two and a half years ago, she visited me in the hospital. I saw her last week at Stanford; she's just declared Secondary Education as her major. We've kept in touch since she graduated two years ago. I've also been given a seventh grade girl to mentor; her name is Lacey Garver. Until last summer, she was known as Lance. Her parents are also supportive of her transition; she hopes to have her operation when she finishes eighth or ninth grade," she explained.

After Karen, a high school senior named Tanya Zhang joined the conversation. "I think mentoring our young girls who are beginning their transition from boys is one of the best things we have to offer here at Rainbow. When I came to this school from Shanghai when I started my freshman year of high

school, Mandy Hashimoto, who was a junior, took me under her wing. She taught me everything I needed to know about being a girl. I'm now passing what Mandy taught me to a seventh grader named Stephanie Park; she came here last fall from Waipahu, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Mandy had her operation in Tokyo when she finished eighth grade. Mandy graduated shortly before I had my operation here in San Francisco. We still keep in touch; she's a Social Work major at Cal," Tanya added.

"Finding a suitable mentor to guide her through her transition from male to female is very important. When I began my transition, a fashion model named Donna Allen took me under her wing. It was eight years ago; I was living in Paris, and my career in the fashion world was just taking off. Six years before I began living as Nora, Donna had her gender reassignment surgery in Saint-Etienne. She came to Paris from a small town in North Dakota. She taught me all the ins and outs of being a woman; from how to carry myself as a woman to applying makeup. She even helped me select my feminine wardrobe. When I had my operation six years ago, she sent me a get-well card. A year after my operation, both of us returned to the United States. Donna went to work as a bridal fashion model in New York, while I took my present job here in San Francisco. We still keep in touch; Donna has even modeled at fashion shows to benefit our schools in Chicago, Baltimore and on Long Island; she plans to be out here for the benefit fashion show next month; she's also got Los Angeles on her itinerary," added Nora.

When the support groups dismissed around quarter to five, I went back to my office to gather my course materials and my students' class work to be graded, and locked the office for the day. I met Elizabeth in the courtyard; we left campus at five minutes before five o'clock in the afternoon, and made our

way to my sister Janet's house to pick up the kids. She lives in an apartment just five minutes away from our residence. We took the kids out for pizza before going to the family fun center. The kids were tired by the time we got home around quarter to seven.

The kids were fast asleep as Elizabeth and I graded our students' papers. She had just finished grading papers for her Elementary Algebra class when she asked me: "Sweetie, what's the most important thing you've learned in the years you've taught at Rainbow?"

"The most important thing I've learned, darling, is patience. When I was teaching in Oakland, I had little patience for students who acted like animals. Whenever a student acted up in my classroom, I thought giving him or her 100 sentences to write repeatedly was not a harsh enough assignment. Anyone who disrupted the class in a manner that threatened the safety of other students got sent to the principal's office immediately. It's a lot different at Rainbow. The girls at the school, regardless of whether they've been through a traumatic experience in life or transitioning from one gender to another, have displayed amazing patience. If the girls I teach are patient, so should I. We are often reminded that patience is a virtue...and my virtue hasn't been taxed as much at Rainbow than it was when I taught in Oakland," I explained.

"I've learned that understanding a student's need to transition from one gender to another is a lot more complicated than solving for 'x' or 'y'. There are a lot of different issues involved. Legal name changes, hormone treatments, planning for transition and surgery; these are issues that the average person doesn't understand. Yet, we have to deal with them every day. We are better people because of the girls we deal with. The issues that the troubled girls deal



with are also unique, but are just as complex. Histories of trauma, post-traumatic stress, aggressive, unfeminine behavior, abusive backgrounds, even a criminal record; it's also difficult for the average person to understand the issues a deeply troubled young woman deals with. It's also made us realize how lucky we really are to come from loving, nurturing families," she added.

"What made you think of that, Liz?" I asked her.

"It's the problems I gave my Elementary Algebra students. For example, I looked at this problem: 'x divided by thirteen equals twelve. It's a simple algebraic expression. All of the students came up with the solution by multiplying thirteen by twelve, coming up with the answer 156. Therefore, they figured out that x equals 156. I thought about the issues our students have to deal with, regardless whether the student is troubled or transgender, every day while grading my students' work," she replied.

We finished grading our students' work around nine-thirty in the evening; we had our students' work and course materials together before Elizabeth went to our bedroom to turn on the television. I made a bowl of popcorn for us; we watched classic television shows until the late news came on at eleven o'clock. After the news, we were ready to go to sleep.

"Good night, Liz," I whispered to her.

"Good night, Jerry," she whispered back before we shared a kiss. We turned out the lights, and went to sleep, looking forward to another day.

**Paul Eric Thierry, Department of
Computer Science, and Susan Elizabeth
Richards Thierry, Department of Fine
Arts**

Susan and Paul Thierry were empty-nesters looking for a new challenge. Both of them are now nearing sixty years of age, have spent thirty years teaching in the public schools in Cincinnati, Ohio before coming to the Rainbow School for Girls campus in the mountains of northern Georgia, an hour's drive north of Atlanta, five years ago. Paul, at seven feet tall, is the tallest faculty member on campus. He has a slender build and salt-and-pepper hair; his look is more reminiscent of a veteran pro basketball player. Susan, who's five-eleven, has an athletic build and shoulder-length auburn hair.

Their twin sons, Paul and Phil, are now professors; Paul teaches Psychology at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, while Phil teaches Mathematics at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Their oldest daughter, Sarah, is now a personal injury attorney in Cleveland, Ohio. Their youngest daughter, Stephanie, now teaches second grade at a public elementary school in Galesburg, Illinois.

Susan, a native of Covington, Kentucky, was introduced to Paul, a native of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, while they were students at Ohio State University in Columbus. Shortly after receiving their degrees and teaching certificates, Susan and Paul married in Cincinnati, where they began their teaching careers. Ten years into their careers, Susan got her Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Cincinnati; Paul got his Master's in Social Work three years later at Xavier University. They raised their four children in Cincinnati.

The North Georgia campus is the only one in which living quarters are provided for some faculty members. Susan and Paul decided against living on campus in favor of commuting from their home in Alpharetta. The campus is located on twenty-five acres near State Roads 372 and 20 in Cherokee County; a winding road, three and a half miles long, connects the campus to State Road 372.

It was the middle part of May, late in the academic year. Graduation was still three weeks away. The customary heat and humidity of a typical Southern summer was making an early visit. It was six-thirty in the morning when they left their home in the Windward community for the scenic drive to the school. Paul was wearing a red polo shirt, a pair of khaki pants, a pair of white socks and red and white athletic shoes; Susan was in a yellow summer dress with off-white open-toed pumps. Stopping at a fast food restaurant for breakfast, they arrived on campus around seven-fifteen. Paul's schedule was teaching three sections of Introduction to Computer Science, along with a section of Introduction to Operating Systems and two sections of Introduction to Internet Security. Susan's schedule included two sections of Art Appreciation, two sections of Music Appreciation, one section of Art History and one section of History of Popular Music. Both would have their planning period at third hour.

It had been a trying past six months at the school. A sex scandal had occurred at the school in November; Alexander Philips, a teacher in the Social Science department, was having an affair with Marina Draper, a seventeen-year-old high school senior from Bristol, Virginia. She was sent to the school after several run-ins with the law, including selling heroin for her father, a drug dealer in Kingsport, Tennessee. Her mother was already serving time in a Tennessee

“Did you ever have Mr. Hamilton for any of your math classes?” Paul then asked.

“I had him for Basic Calculus last spring,” she replied.

“He passed away Saturday evening. He was visiting friends in St. Louis, where he’s from, when he suffered a massive heart attack. He was rushed to a local hospital, where he passed away,” Paul added.

“You and Mrs. Thierry were good friends with Mr. Hamilton,” Stephanie then added.

“I’ll see you in class,” he told her before both his office phone and her cell phone rang. The atmosphere got even more somber within a minute. Paul wiped the tears from his eyes with a handkerchief; Stephanie was crying. Something terrible had happened to one of the students on weekend furlough.

Five minutes later, Susan appeared at Paul’s office; she immediately comforted Stephanie. “What’s happened now?” she asked.

“Susan, you’ve gotten the news that Kenney Hamilton died over the weekend. One of the students also died over the weekend,” he replied.

“Have we got any details on the second death?” she then asked while comforting Stephanie.

“Phoebe Daniels went home to Starkville, Mississippi over the weekend. Her great-grandmother passed away on Thursday at the age of ninety-two. Phoebe was fourteen years old, in eighth grade and preparing to have gender reassignment surgery next month in San Francisco. She was staying with her parents, who own a popular restaurant there. A gang of six young men broke into their home late Saturday night; they were apparently threatened with Phoebe’s presence in their town. They targeted the Daniels home; her parents were home late Saturday night

when they broke in. They severely beat her parents; Phoebe was stabbed to death. Five of the six men were arrested by sunrise yesterday; the sixth person is still at large this morning,” Paul explained.

“This is so tragic,” Susan added.

Stephanie broke from Susan’s comforting embrace, and sat down in a chair near where Susan was standing. “Phoebe was a very good friend of mine. She has been one of my roommates for the past year. She told me about her previous life as Peter, and that several young men in her hometown were trying to kill her since she came out as a transsexual two years ago. She spent last summer with my supportive parents in Blacksburg, Virginia. She told me about the death of her great-grandmother; I told her that she shouldn’t go. She didn’t listen to me. My biggest fears were confirmed when she didn’t come back to our dorm last night. I was hoping she would be back this morning until I got the word on my cell phone this morning,” she tearfully explained.

“I would like to extend my deepest condolences to you on the death of your friend,” Paul said to Stephanie.

“Thank you, Mr. Thierry,” she tearfully said.

“Are there any memorial services planned?” Paul asked.

“Classes have been canceled for today. All of our counselors have been called in to deal with grieving students and staff. A school-wide memorial service is scheduled for one o’clock this afternoon,” Susan replied.

“Did you teach Phoebe in any of your classes?” Paul then asked.

“I had her in my Music Appreciation class last semester. She worked very hard to get an ‘A’ in the

course. She was very helpful to the students who were struggling in the class,” Susan remembered.

“I had her in my Introduction to Information Systems class at this time last year; she was in my Introduction to Operating Systems class this semester. She showed a real aptitude for computer science,” Paul added.

The school's acting Headmistress, Kendra Mitchell, came to Paul's office. Six feet, two inches tall with a slender build, long black hair, wearing a floral print dress, she took over when the current semester began in January. “Paul, may I have a word with you?” she asked.

“I'll be taking Stephanie to the Counseling Center,” Susan informed him.

Susan left with Stephanie before Paul asked what was on Kendra's mind. “I know that you and Susan were good friends with Kenney Hamilton. I'd like to ask if you would say a few words this afternoon at the memorial service,” she said to him.

“Susan and I were good friends with him for over thirty years; I would be happy to say a few words about Kenney this afternoon,” he informed her.

While she was in my office, Kendra received a text over her cell phone from the local sheriff. “What is it?” Paul asked her.

“The last of the men who invaded Phoebe's residence in Mississippi has been picked up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota,” she replied.

“How long ago did this take place?”

“He was apprehended an hour and a half ago, Paul.”

“Will there be any hate crimes charges?”

“All six of the men who invaded the residence of Phoebe’s family will be charged with a hate crime, since Phoebe, as a transgender individual, was the target of the home invasion. They have some sort of hatred toward transgender individuals.”

“Are they with some kind of anti-LGBT group?”

“They’re with a White Supremacist hate group based in Tupelo. Federal agents have had their headquarters under surveillance for eight months now.”

“What about her parents?”

“Her parents are still hospitalized; their injuries were severe enough to require them to be airlifted to a hospital in Birmingham, Alabama. They’re in serious condition now; they arrived in the wee hours of Sunday morning in critical condition.”

“Will her great-grandmother’s funeral go on as scheduled?”

“Her guidance counselor, Zachary Foland, will be at the funeral on Wednesday. He’ll also be there to counsel her family. She left behind three brothers and two sisters, as well as her maternal grandfather, her paternal grandparents and a host of aunts and uncles, all of whom were supportive of her transition from boy to girl.”

“Will there be a funeral for Phoebe?”

“Her remains will be cremated, in accordance with her wishes. She has asked that her teachers and classmates cast her ashes into her favorite place to go hiking, Lake Lanier.”

Once Kendra finished that statement, his phone rang. “Paul Thierry,” he said into the receiver. It was Kenney’s son, Kevin, on the phone.

“How are you holding up, Kevin?” he asked him.

“Pretty well, considering what has happened. I’ve taken charge of my father’s funeral arrangements,” Kevin replied.

“I’ve been asked to say a few words at a memorial service on campus this afternoon. He was very committed to the academic excellence of his students.”

“I was wondering if you would be a pallbearer at my father’s funeral.”

“Yes, I would be honored to be one of his pallbearers. When is your father’s funeral?”

“The arrangements were just finalized a few minutes ago. Visitation will be Friday night from four until nine o’clock; the funeral home is in Affton. The funeral will be Saturday afternoon at one o’clock. He will be buried next to my mother at Calvary Cemetery.”

“Susan and I will arrive Thursday night.”

After I finished my conversation with Kevin, Susan returned to my office. “Who was that on the phone?” she asked him.

“That was Kevin Hamilton. The funeral arrangements have just been finalized for Kenney,” he replied.

“When is the funeral?”

“The visitation will be Friday night from four until nine o’clock at the funeral home on Gravois Road. The funeral will be Saturday afternoon at one o’clock; I have been asked to be one of the pallbearers. He will be laid to rest next to his wife at Calvary Cemetery in north St. Louis.”

“When are we requested to arrive in St. Louis?”

“We leave after teaching our classes on Thursday. I’ve notified the co-facilitators for our groups that we

won't be there on Thursday and Friday. I'll be preparing a list of assignments for my students for Friday."

"I'm only giving my Music Appreciation students a listening assignment on Friday. All of my other students will have no homework."

"I'd take it you will be off campus on Friday," Kendra said to them.

"Paul and I will not be here on Friday; we're leaving after our seventh hour classes on Thursday," Susan informed her.

"If you will excuse me, I have to talk to a student about saying a few words about Phoebe," Kendra said as she was leaving for one of the student dorms.

"Where is Kendra off to?" Paul asked.

"She's off to one of the student dorms," Susan replied.

"While you were talking to Kendra, I booked our tickets for St. Louis. We'll be on Flight 1754, leaving at seven o'clock Eastern time, with an arrival time of five minutes after seven o'clock Central time," he added.

Paul would spend the next two hours writing some notes for the memorial service. At ten o'clock, he would go over to the Counseling Center to talk things over with Zachary. Twenty-eight years old, five-ten with an average build, a crew cut and wearing a red button-down shirt, olive drab green pants and a pair of brown loafers, he had just finished booking his flight to Columbus, Mississippi when Paul came in.

"Mr. Thierry, sit down," Zachary said, motioning Paul to come into his office.

"I really need to talk about Kenney's passing with a counselor," Paul confided.

“I understand you and Susan were very close with Kenney,” Zachary added.

“Susan and I met Kenney Hamilton twenty years ago. Susan and Kenney were both graduate students in Social Work at the University of Cincinnati. Kenney took a year off from teaching for his Master’s studies. All three of us were dealing with an increasing number of special needs students in our classes; Susan was the first to recognize this; she was accepted into the graduate program at Cincinnati. He encouraged me to go for my Master’s in Social Work; after getting rejected at Cincinnati, I was accepted at Xavier.

He had his parents help him take care of his son, Kevin, and his daughter, Rachel, since his wife, Roxanne, died while giving birth to Rachel three years before entering graduate school. He often talked about her with us. When we retired from teaching in the Cincinnati school system, Kenney, who was teaching in Chicago by that time, recommended that we apply for teaching positions at Rainbow. We accepted the positions here in Georgia about the same time he was being transferred to St. Louis. We finally got the opportunity to work with him seven years ago, when he came to this campus.”

“I’d take it he was deeply hurt by Roxanne’s sudden death.”

“He was. It happened right at the end of the academic year; he spent the whole summer not only mourning, but also thinking about his career. Kevin persuaded him to return to the classroom; he was motivated to give his teaching 110%. In retrospect, he told me that continuing his career, and getting his MSW, was what Roxanne would have wanted him to do.”

“Fifty-three years is a very long time to be teaching math.”

“Susan and I have been teaching our particular subjects for thirty-five years now. That’s a long time in any subject. Kenney really enjoyed teaching math to the young folks, especially the girls he’s taught over the last twenty years.”

“Have you been contacted by any of his family members?”

“His son contacted me earlier today; I’m going to be one of the pallbearers at his funeral on Saturday.”

“I have to be in Starkville to attend the funeral for Phoebe’s great-grandmother. I’m also going to be there to counsel the family in their most difficult hour. I’m expected to receive Phoebe’s ashes before I return to Georgia.”

“I’m just shocked at the suddenness of his death. He was very healthy for a man seventy-six years old. Susan is shocked at his sudden passing, too.”

“I think that when Susan and I write our journal entries this evening, it will definitely be our longest entries ever.”

“Did you have to deal with the death of a student before?”

“I only dealt with a student’s death once. This was in my fifth year of teaching in the Cincinnati school system. I was teaching a class in DOS at a high school on the city’s north side. It was on a Sunday morning, just as Susan and I were going to church with the kids that I got the news that one of my students was killed by a wrong-way driver in Hamilton. He was a running back on the varsity football team and one of my best students. He had a definite future as a computer technician. The driver who drove the wrong way on one of the major roads was a college student; his blood-alcohol content was three times the legal limit. He served eighteen years for involuntary manslaughter. This kid’s death tore everyone up

inside. The entire football team dedicated the remainder of the season to his memory; they were runners-up for the state football title that year; a team from a high school in Ashtabula won that year. I still remember this young man's achievements, thirty years after it happened."

"Paul, I have a lot of students and staff to see before the memorial service; thanks for stopping by."

"Thanks for the time, Zach; I really needed to talk about this with someone."

After talking with Zachary, Susan met Paul in the cafeteria for lunch. "I see a lot of heavy hearts at this school," she told him.

"Let's get something to eat before the memorial service," he added.

Susan got herself a salad and a glass of unsweetened tea, while Paul picked up a salad, a meatball hero sandwich and a glass of lemonade. They looked over the assignments planned for each of their classes for Friday before returning to their offices to continue talking with students about the deaths of Kenney Hamilton and Phoebe Daniels.

The memorial service would begin at two o'clock. Paul arrived with the school's chaplains, the Reverend Wesley Samples and the Reverend Tara Lawrence, around quarter to two. Reverend Samples was in a tailored navy blue suit, while Reverend Lawrence was in a black skirt, matching jacket and antique white blouse with black high heels. It was ten minutes of two when Jennifer Trigg arrived. She would be delivering a few words on Phoebe. She's five-nine, athletic build, fifteen years old with shoulder-length auburn hair. The native of Mountain City, Tennessee had her gender surgically reassigned eleven months ago in San Francisco. She was wearing the school's

standard yellow plaid skirt, white blouse, white knee-high socks and yellow flats.

The four sat in chairs set up on the stage, just two yards from the podium. It was approximately two o'clock when Kendra came to the podium.

“As you may have heard by now, this school was hit with two tragedies over the weekend. Early Saturday evening, Robert Kenneth ‘Kenney’ Hamilton, a veteran teacher in the Math Department, died of a massive heart attack while visiting friends in St. Louis, Missouri. He was seventy-six years old and a veteran of fifty-three years of teaching in public and private schools. Late Saturday night, six intruders broke into the home of the family of Phoebe Daniels in Starkville, Mississippi.

She was apparently targeted because of her transition from boy to girl. Phoebe was stabbed to death by one of the armed men; her parents, Philip and Nora Daniels, were severely beaten. Mr. and Mrs. Daniels are hospitalized this afternoon in Birmingham, Alabama in serious condition. Five of the six attackers were apprehended within six hours; four of them were arrested in Starkville, while a fifth attacker was arrested in Vernon, Alabama. The sixth attacker was apprehended this morning in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. All six are facing state charges of breaking and entering, as well as assault and first-degree murder, as well as federal hate crimes charges, since their target was a transgender person. All of us have been shocked at the sudden turn of events, so soon after the sex scandal that cost one teacher his job and forced my predecessor to resign. Right now, I'd like to turn the podium over to one of our chaplains, the Reverend Wesley Samples,” Kendra told the assembly.

Wesley began with a question: “Shall we pray?” A moment of silence fell over the auditorium before he

began. "Heavenly Father, we come here today to remember two of our friends. We're also gathered to remember the importance of the word 'education'. May the words spoken today be those of remembrance and comfort, and may your love and comfort spread across this auditorium. In God's name we pray. Amen."

Paul came up first to say a few words about Kenney. "When my wife and I met Kenney Hamilton thirty years ago, he was a graduate student in Social Work at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. The three of us were dealing with an increase in the number of special needs students in our classes. Fifty-three years ago, Kenney began his career after receiving his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau. Robert Kenneth 'Kenney' Hamilton grew up in St. Louis, Missouri; his father was a grocer. He worked in his father's grocery store to save up the money he needed to go to college. For the next thirty-three years, he taught high school math, algebra and calculus in the public school system in St. Louis. His greatest joy was in passing what he knew to his students. He loved his work so much, that he influenced his son, Kevin Hamilton, and his daughter, Rachel Hamilton Beckett, to become teachers themselves. Rachel is now teaching at Rainbow's campus in Los Angeles, while Kevin is teaching in the public schools in St. Charles, Missouri."

Paul paused for a few moments, before continuing: "The lowest point in his life came when his beloved wife, Roxanne, passed away while giving birth to their daughter, Rachel, thirty-three years ago. Kenney Hamilton and Roxanne Johnston were both teachers when they met forty-five years ago; she was a first-year English teacher. Roxanne grew up in the same neighborhood Kenney grew up in, although she graduated from high school eight years after he did.

He courted her for two years before they got married. Thirty-eight years ago, they were blessed with a son named Kevin.

Roxanne's sudden death was devastating to Kenney, but Kevin, who was then five years old, encouraged Kenney to continue in his career. While he was in graduate school at the University of Cincinnati, he was a substitute math teacher in Hamilton, Ohio for a year before returning to St. Louis with a Master's degree in Social Work in hand. He also doubled as a school social worker during the final years of his career.

After thirty-three years of teaching in the St. Louis Public Schools, Kenney Hamilton retired. At the time he retired, he was teaching calculus at Soldan High School. He wanted a new challenge in his life; he came to the Rainbow School for Girls in San Francisco twenty years ago. Teaching troubled girls, along with girls who were going through the transition from boys, would be a challenge that he would completely enjoy. He would spend eight years in San Francisco teaching high school math, before moving on to a similar assignment in Chicago for four years. After Chicago, he would teach at Rainbow's campus in Dittmer, Missouri for a year before accepting the position here in north Georgia seven years ago. His first love was for his students, all the way up to the very end."

Pausing for a moment to wipe away a tear, he concluded: "He loved you as much as you loved him during the seven years he taught here. When Susan and I retired from teaching in Cincinnati five years ago, Kenney told us about the opportunities at Rainbow; we were very fortunate to get the positions we have now. Mr. Hamilton will be sadly missed by all who knew him. He leaves behind his son, Kevin, and his wife, Karen, of O'Fallon, Missouri, his daughter, Rachel, and her husband, Kevin Beckett of Culver City,

California, and nine grandchildren. In addition, he is survived by his brother, Will Hamilton of Kirkwood, Missouri, and two sisters, Grace Miller of San Antonio, Texas and Stephanie Paulsen of Warroad, Minnesota, as well as a host of nieces and nephews. Kenney Hamilton now belongs to the ages.”

Paul got a standing ovation before sitting back down where he previously sat before taking the podium. Kendra introduced the next speaker. “Our next speaker will be saying a few words about Phoebe Daniels. Jennifer Trigg is a freshman at Rainbow. She came to us from Mountain City, Tennessee, where her parents run a real estate business. She hopes to be a counselor one day. She carries a 4.0 grade point average, one of the members of the school debate team that’s right now defending the championship of the entire State of Georgia, and had a successful transition from boy to girl, culminating with her gender reassignment surgery last summer in San Francisco. Ladies and gentlemen, the captain of the debate team, Miss Jennifer Trigg.”

Loud applause rung all over the auditorium as Jennifer came to the podium. She wiped away a tear as she began her remarks. “When I met Phoebe Suzanne Daniels nearly two years ago, she had just begun her new life as a girl. For the first twelve years of her life, she was known as Peter; the name just didn’t fit her. She faced a lot of bullying because of her feminine ways by her male classmates in her hometown of Starkville, Mississippi. She was the fourth of six children; from an early age, she knew that she should have been a girl. When she came out as transgender two years ago, her parents were told of the reputation of The Rainbow School for Girls for educating transgender girls throughout the country. I was also transitioning from Joey to Jennifer when I met Phoebe.

She was assigned as my roommate; we became the best of friends right away. We did practically everything together: study, shop at the mall, watch movies, even tease the boys. We both had the same goal in mind: we wanted to transition to girls, and have our genders surgically reassigned. Phoebe sent me a get-well card when I had my operation last year in San Francisco.”

Jennifer wiped away a tear as she continued: “The moment I really sensed something was wrong was last spring, after she returned from spending Spring Break back home in Starkville. ‘Jenny, I am deathly afraid,’ she said. I asked her why she would be feeling this way. She told me about the six men who threatened her and her family. These six men were brothers of her classmates at the elementary school she attended in her male life; they were obviously threatened by her presence. She was so petrified, that she didn’t want to spend the summer with her parents back home. Stephanie Sorin, our roommate and a very good friend of ours, put her up with her parents at her family’s home in Blacksburg, Virginia. Her parents understood why she wanted to stay away from Starkville.”

Wiping away another tear, she went on: “Last Thursday, she got an E-mail from her mother. I have a copy of it in front of me, and I would like to read it to you. It reads: ‘Dear Phoebe, I have some bad news for you. Your great-grandmother Daniels passed away this afternoon. I know how uncomfortable you are about coming home, but please come home at once. We need you here. I hope your classmates, especially your friend, Jenny, will understand. Love, Mom.’ I told her not to go home to be with her family and pay her last respects to her great-grandmother, but she went anyway. When I got the news of Phoebe’s violent death this morning, I was completely devastated. I had lost my best friend; it was more like losing a sis-

ter. Phoebe was really looking forward to traveling to San Francisco to have the operation that would complete her transition from boy to girl. It's so sad that six young men were stupid enough to invade her family's home, and bring a violent end to her life."

She paused to wipe away another tear, before tearfully telling the assembly: "This serves as a wake-up call to our community to fight anti-transgender hate. Phoebe Daniels is the latest victim of the hatred directed at members of our community. We must honor her memory by increasing awareness of our transgender brothers and sisters throughout the world, not just in our communities. We must fight for justice for our transgender brothers and sisters; we must also fight for a just punishment for the men who killed Phoebe and severely beat her parents. We are saddened and angered at this dastardly deed; and we will make sure we never forget."

Jennifer stepped down from the podium to a standing ovation, and sat down where she previously sat, crying her heart out. Paul comforted her as she continued to cry. Kendra added this note: "Phoebe is survived by her parents, Philip and Nora Daniels of Starkville, Mississippi, her brothers, Philip Daniels, Junior of Hoffman Estates, Illinois, Nathan Daniels of Kansas City, Kansas and Norbert Daniels of Starkville, Mississippi; two sisters, Nancy Daniels Talbot of Rancho Palos Verdes, California and Priscilla Daniels of Champaign, Illinois. Also surviving are her maternal grandfather, Beauregard Jones of Heflin, Alabama and her paternal grandparents, Paul and Francine Daniels of Columbus, Mississippi. Phoebe will be sadly missed by those who knew her, especially her classmates, roommates and teachers. We extend our most sincere condolences to the Daniels family in their most difficult hour."

The assembly ended at three-twenty with Reverend Tara Lawrence delivering the Benediction. "Our

Most Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift you gave us in Kenney Hamilton and Phoebe Daniels. They may be gone from this earthly life, but we will always remember what they did here on earth. Thank you for the word 'education' and for the opportunity to strengthen its meaning to the girls that attend this school, and to those who teach the young women who will be shaping our future. We leave this room filled with Your Grace, Your Comfort, and Your Divine Love. In God's Precious Name we pray. Amen." The students, staff and faculty stayed around long after the service ended.

The support groups were also canceled that day; Susan and Paul got their laptop computers, as well as their course materials, and headed for home around four o'clock. Before they left their offices, they found out that Max Edwin, a thirty-two-year-old former high school math teacher in the Cobb County schools who had spent most of this year as a substitute teacher in Fulton County, was named to take over for Kenney. As they were coming home, news of Phoebe's murder was the top story on the local radio newscasts. When they got in the front door of their residence at quarter to five, they set their laptop computers on the dining room table. Paul put a frozen pizza into the oven for dinner.

Shortly after they finished watching the national news at six-thirty, on which Phoebe's murder received substantial coverage, Susan began putting her thoughts to words in her journal. She dated the entry May 15. "Today was one of the most difficult days I've ever had to go through as a teacher. Kenney Hamilton was a good friend of ours for over thirty years; he encouraged my husband to get his Master's degree in social work.

He cared for his students like they were his own children, regardless of whether they were the young men and women he taught in his hometown of St.

Louis for thirty-three years, or the young troubled and transgender girls he taught for the last twenty years. He was purely devoted to his work teaching our young people mathematics, including algebra, calculus, geometry, even trigonometry; a subject that the students of today are sorely lagging behind on. His influence will live on, not only in the lives of his son, Kevin, and his daughter, Rachel, but also in the young lives he touched over his fifty-three years in education. We've been fortunate to know such a humble soul as Kenney."

Gathering her thoughts, she continued on: "While I am saddened for the family of Phoebe Daniels, I am consumed with anger at the men who brought a sudden and violent end to her promising life. She was looking forward to finally completing her transition from boy to girl. It makes me realize that even though transgender people are increasingly being accepted into society, there are still some folks who are brazen and dumb enough to treat a transgender person like a second-class citizen, or worse. The attitudes displayed by those who hate not only transgender people, but anyone who they perceive as 'different', are not the kind of attitudes that are desirable in today's society. It is a desirable attitude to treat people perceived as 'different' with an objective and open mind, and respect them for who and what they are. Phoebe showed a lot of promise in the area of the arts; she really showed an aptitude toward objective criticism of music, especially the popular music many of her generation listen to. It's so sad that she will never be able to realize the potential she showed. This is something that her family will have a hard time recovering from; especially with Phoebe's murder coming on the heels of the passing of her great-grandmother. I just wish we could get rid of hatred toward the transgender community with a magic wand."

Paul didn't get started on his thoughts until after eight o'clock. "If anybody was listening to the news today, everyone will know that we've had a very difficult last forty-eight hours in the Rainbow School for Girls community. Kenney Hamilton, our good friend and colleague, was a picture of health all the way up to the end. His devotion to his work and his students will be long remembered. He was really devoted to his family and his friends, not only here in Georgia, but also where he taught.

He made many friends in Cincinnati when he attended graduate school. He also made many friends at the three Rainbow campuses he taught at over the two decades he was with us. Most of all, he made many friends in St. Louis, where he grew up. It didn't matter if he was teaching the young minds of St. Louis, many of whom were the children and grandchildren of the people he grew up with, or the troubled and transgender girls he taught at Rainbow; his students were very special to him. I will miss the intelligent way he went about his work, his friendliness toward everyone he knew, his dedication to his fifty-three-year career and the love and respect his students had for him, and he for his students. Nobody knew that he had planned to retire at the end of this academic year, and spend his remaining days fishing at Table Rock Lake. Heck, he fished that lake many times when he taught in St. Louis," he wrote.

He paused for a moment to reflect on what he wrote, and sipped some coffee out of his cup. "The murder of Phoebe Daniels made me realize how precious life really is. You can't replace the promise she showed in the two short years she lived full-time as the girl she should have been in the first place. No matter how far we've come in the acceptance of our transgender brothers and sisters over the past twenty to thirty years, Phoebe's senseless death makes me realize there's still a long way to go. There's

still way too much hatred toward the transgender population, especially in our country during the early years of the Twenty-First Century.

Phoebe's hope for a society that is more understanding and accepting of the transgender community is now our hope. One day, that dream will come true. It is now up to her teachers, her classmates, her roommates, her friends and family to continue the fight for the acceptance of the transgender community by society at large. The six young men who committed this cowardly act are an example of the kind of attitudes toward the transgender community, as well as those who are perceived as 'different' by society; these attitudes are no longer acceptable in today's society. Like my wife, I am also consumed by anger for those who committed this cowardly act; it is my hope that justice will be served. While I oppose the death penalty in most cases, the brutal murder of Phoebe Daniels, in my honest opinion, is an act in which the only appropriate sentence for the man who held her down to the floor and the man who plunged the bayonet thirty-six times into her body is death."

The longest day in their careers ended when they finally turned in at eleven o'clock. "It's been often asked, Susan; and there's no clear answer. 'What is the world coming to?' If I had to answer that question, I really have no sufficient answer. Phoebe's murder is a crime that many cannot comprehend. For those whose job is to teach the people going through the transition from one gender to another, we know this all too well," Paul said, feeling totally exhausted.

"Paul, I also have no clear answer to that question. Dealing with the violent death of a student is hard enough; however, Phoebe's sudden and violent death is something that's very difficult to deal with, even for the teachers. While her death is senseless, there's something we can take from this; the most notable

being that the pain is going to be there for the rest of our lives. Her parents and family...I don't know if they're going to recover from this or not," Susan added, also feeling completely exhausted.

"Good night, dear," Paul whispered.

"Good night, honey," Susan whispered before sharing a kiss and turning the lights out. Tomorrow will be a much better day.

Robert Eric Johnson – Department of Mathematics

August 27 marked the first day of the new academic year at the Rainbow School for Girls campus in Dittmer, Missouri, where I was starting my fourth year of teaching middle school mathematics. The day is usually a long one, which included my long drive from my bachelor pad in Kirkwood. My teaching schedule during the fall session includes seventh grade mathematics at first, third and seventh hours and eighth grade mathematics at second, fourth and sixth hours, with fifth hour being my period for course planning and coordination. I also was given co-facilitator duties for one of the middle school transgender support groups. The girls' summer uniform was a white blouse with a gold plaid skirt that extended down just below the knees, with white stockings and gold and white flats.

Before I started teaching at Rainbow, I taught middle and high school math for fifteen years in the public schools. Seven of those years were spent in Dallas, followed by an eight-year stretch in Milwaukee. When I was not offered a contract in Milwaukee, I was recruited by the Rainbow School for Girls to teach math at one of their campuses. I took the offer in Dittmer so I could be closer to my family in Alton, Illi-

nois. I was told that I would be given a unique perspective by teaching at an all-girls school, especially one that deals with troubled and transgender girls.

My day began when the alarm went off at five o'clock in the morning. I looked outside to see that it was getting close to dawn. After a shower and shave, I made a plate of bacon and eggs for breakfast, washing it down with a big glass of orange juice. It was almost six o'clock when I got into my brand new Buick Lacrosse, and made the long drive to work.

Leaving my apartment complex, I proceeded south on Geyer Road to Big Bend, then went east on Big Bend to Lindbergh Boulevard. I got on Interstate 44 westbound at Lindbergh, and proceeded west to State Road 141, heading south to State Road 30. Much of the time was spent traveling west on State Road 30 until I got to a two-lane road east of Dittmer. The first characteristic I noticed was the winding road that was six miles long leading to the campus. Long and winding roads leading to the campus, usually in a secluded area, is one of the characteristics of the Rainbow campuses outside the cities. It was twenty-five minutes to seven when I arrived on campus, and eased into my parking spot.

The Rainbow School for Girls at Dittmer, also known by its abbreviated name of Rainbow-St. Louis, is a forty-five minute drive from downtown St. Louis. The campus opened six years ago. The administration and classroom buildings are of the modern design. There are six four-story dormitory buildings on the campus; two each of the Art Deco and Bauhaus styles, while the remaining two were inspired by the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Science and Mathematics building is directly in back of the Administration building.

When I arrived at my office, in Room 21 on the ground floor of the Science and Mathematics build-

ing, at quarter to seven, I started the task of organizing my papers for the six classes I would teach. Just as I was finishing with the organization of my paperwork for my second hour class, I heard a knock on my office door.

“Come in,” I said. I turned around to find out it was Rebecca Smith, the school’s headmistress.

“Bobby, I don’t know if you’ve heard, but you’ve been assigned a student teacher for your second hour eighth grade Mathematics class. Her name is Jane Martin; she’s presently a math and education major at Maryville University. She’s a senior originally from Leeds in the United Kingdom; she’s looking to teach in an all-girls school when she gets back to England,” Rebecca explained.

“Is this the only class she will be student teaching in?” I asked her.

“She’s also going to do the same thing in Megan Wallis’ ninth grade geometry class at third hour and Keith Dwyer’s high school trigonometry class at fourth hour. Unlike most of the student teachers we’ve had, she’s dealt with both troubled and transgender girls in her previous experience,” she replied.

“What’s her previous experience?”

“Her older sister, Jennifer, is a pre-operative, male-to-female transsexual. She has been living full-time as a woman since Jane came to the States three years ago. Jennifer Martin is a fashion model and photographer in London; she spent the first twenty-one years of her life as a male named Joel. Jane has been very supportive of her sister’s transition from man to woman; Jennifer plans to have her operation done in London while Jane is on her semester break in December.”

“Thanks for letting me know. I’ll do my best to make a good teacher out of her.”

My first two classes were in Room 418 on the fourth floor. Between the end of my first hour and the start of my second hour class, a young woman with shoulder-length red hair, five-eight with a slender build, wearing a lavender dress and matching flats, walked into the classroom. “Mr. Johnson?” she asked me with a British accent.

“I’m Bobby Johnson,” I replied.

“I’m Jane Martin, the student teacher assigned to your class,” she added.

“Welcome to Rainbow-St. Louis,” I said with a smile.

“I’m very happy to be here,” she told me, before asking me about the makeup of this class.

“Jane, there are sixteen students in this class. Ten of these students are in various stages of transitioning from boys to girls. The other six are troubled girls, born female; five are wards of the court, while the sixth girl was sent here by her parents after she got into too many fights at her middle school in Mountain Home, Arkansas,” I replied.

When the clock struck nine o’clock, I closed the door to the classroom. “Good morning, girls; this class is Grade Eight Mathematics. I am your instructor, Mr. Johnson. The young lady sitting in the chair next to this desk is the student teacher assigned to us this semester, Miss Martin,” I told the class.

“I am originally from Leeds, in the United Kingdom. I’m a senior at Maryville University in Town and Country, majoring in secondary education and mathematics. I hope to teach at a school similar to this back home. I have a sister who has something in common with ten of the students in this class. My



older sister, Jennifer Martin, is going through the same thing most of you are going through. She's a successful fashion model and photographer in London; she's twenty-six years old. Until five years ago, she had been a male named Joel. She's planning to have her sex surgically reassigned after Christmas at Charing Cross in London.

"I also have one thing in common with you: I'm also a troubled girl. I had been expelled from three different schools before my parents realized I was around the bad apples of the school. I often fought with the girls; I even had a few scrapes with the lads. I was a real tomboyish girl. I was sent to an all-girls' school in Stratford, where I was straightened out, and taught me how to act and look more feminine. I won a scholarship when I was finishing secondary school; I decided to come to school in the United States, wanting to experience a different culture from the one I grew up in back home," she explained.

We went through with the class introductions; we had one that stood out. It came from a tall, blonde girl in the front of the fourth row. "Mr. Johnson, Miss Martin, my name is Gloria Thomas. I'm originally from Vincennes, Indiana; I'm transitioning from boy to girl. I've been living full-time as Gloria since I started the seventh grade. For the first twelve years of my life, I was a boy named Glenn. I knew I should have been a girl from the time I was four years old. Although I was an honor student in elementary school, I never really felt I was really a boy. I really enjoyed playing dress-up with my sister, Monica, and her friends instead of playing sports with the other boys. I was teased and taunted for my effeminate ways, like most people in my situation. Finally, after I finished sixth grade, I told my parents and Monica that I did not like being a boy, and wanted to become a girl. You would think my parents would yell at me if I told them I wanted to have a sex change, especially at

such a young age. I was surprised to find out that they were supportive of my desire to become a girl. At the recommendation of my therapist, I was sent to this school. I've enjoyed every class I've taken here so far; I really enjoy math," Gloria explained.

"Do you hope to possibly be a math teacher one day?" Jane asked her.

"I'm thinking about it, Miss Martin," Gloria replied.

After my seventh hour class, I went to Room 28 of the Administration building for the support group I was co-facilitating. The guidance counselor from the group the previous year, Holly Corbett, was still the lead facilitator. She's five-three with a slender build, shoulder-length blonde hair, and wearing a pink pantsuit, white blouse and a pair of pink flats. I would be joined by a new co-facilitator. It was about five minutes of four when I arrived. I noticed a strawberry blonde-haired girl of five-eleven with a slender build, wearing a floral print sundress and a pair of white flats. This girl's hair extended down past her shoulders. Holly greeted me when I set my books down.

"Bobby, I have someone for you to meet," Holly told me.

"Is it the new teacher facilitating the group this year?" I asked her.

The young woman walked toward us. "Bobby Johnson, I'd like for you to meet Nina Thompson," she replied.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Bobby," Nina said with a confident smile.

"The pleasure is mutual," I added with an equally confident smile.

There were fifteen girls in our group; this is the standard support group size throughout all the Rainbow campuses. When the clock struck four o'clock, I closed the door to the room, and sat down next to Nina, who was on her first day at Rainbow.

“Good afternoon, girls and our lone gentleman. My name is Holly Corbett; I’m a guidance counselor here at Rainbow-St. Louis. I’m presently a Ph.D. candidate in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. I hold a Bachelor’s degree in secondary education from Southeast Missouri State in Cape Girardeau, and a Master’s degree in social work from Washington University. I’ve been at Rainbow-St. Louis for the past four years; before that, I taught health and psychology at a high school in St. Louis. I’m originally from Sunset Hills; I live in High Ridge with my husband and three sons,” she told the group.

Holly signaled me to go next. “I’m Bobby Johnson; I teach seventh and eighth grade Mathematics. I hold Bachelor’s degrees in mathematics and education from the University of Southern California, as well as Master’s in social work from the University of Wisconsin’s Milwaukee campus. This is my fourth year at Rainbow-St. Louis; I taught in the public schools in Dallas and Milwaukee before I came here. The first thing I learned is that educating transgender girls is not as simple as solving for ‘x’. I’m originally from Alton, Illinois; I live alone in an apartment in Kirkwood,” I said to the girls.

“I’m the new girl in town. My name is Nina Thompson. This is my first day teaching at Rainbow-St. Louis; I teach in the Social Studies department, specializing in sociology. I’m originally from Sanford, Florida. I hold Bachelor’s degrees in sociology and education from Stanford University; I received my Master’s in sociology and social work from the University of California’s main campus in Berkeley two

years ago. I taught for seven years in the public schools in San Francisco. I'm now transitioning from man to woman; I just started living full-time as Nina this past summer, after living the first thirty years of my life as Nick, the man I pretended to be. I hope to have my gender surgically reassigned within the next couple of years. I live in the Central West End of St. Louis with another transsexual woman," Nina told the group.

"We're very glad you've joined us," Holly added.

"Now that you've heard from Nina, let's hear from the young ladies in our group," I then added.

A willowy redhead, five-three with a slender build, went first. "My name is Vanessa Early. I'm twelve years old, in the seventh grade, and just began my transition this past summer. I'm originally from Macomb, Illinois. Until I finished sixth grade, I was a boy named Vinton. I began dressing as a girl when I was two years old; my older sister, Valerie, put on a red satin dress she wore in a Christmas pageant when she was two years old. I dressed in Valerie's old dresses as much as I could. I was teased for my effeminate ways, yet I ignored that and excelled in school. I was an honor student from second grade on. At the end of the last academic year, I told my parents and Valerie I wanted to become a girl. Two weeks after I finished sixth grade, a psychologist in Macomb conferred a diagnosis of gender identity disorder on me; I was referred to this school. I started hormone replacement therapy at the beginning of July; I'm planning to have my operation after I finish the eighth grade."

Next was an auburn-haired girl, five-two with an average build. "I'm Megan Ballard. I'm in the eighth grade, and will be turning fourteen next month. I'm originally from Independence, Missouri, and have been living full-time as a girl since I started seventh

grade. Like with Vanessa, I was referred by a therapist. I began dressing as a girl when I was three, when I dressed in a flower girl's dress my older sister, Michelle, wore when my Aunt Renee got married. I was ten years old when I got into Michelle's prom dress, and had pictures of me taken in that dress. A year later, I had a professional photo shoot done of me in my mother's wedding gown. My parents, Michelle and my older brothers, Michael and Marty, gave me their full support when I told them I wanted to become a girl. I've already aced a whole year of feminine deportment; I hope to have my operation next summer."

After Megan was a girl with short, platinum blonde hair, five-four with a slender build. "My name is Josephine Pernel, but you can call me Josie. I'm in the seventh grade, thirteen years old, originally from Webster Groves. For the first twelve years of my life, I lived as a boy named Joey. My oldest sister, Jennie, is a professional photographer living in Clayton. When I started dressing as a girl, I was three years old and modeling a pink dress Jennie wore in a beauty contest when she was three years old. I also modeled in dresses once worn by my two other sisters, Julie and Jana. I was teased for my effeminate ways throughout school. Finally, when I finished the sixth grade, I told my parents and sisters I wanted to become a girl. I started living full-time as a girl over the summer. I just celebrated my thirteenth birthday last week. I hope to complete my transformation into a girl when I finish the eighth grade next year."

Following Josie was the tallest girl in the group; a five-ten willowy blonde with an athletic build. "I'm Karen Driver. I'm a fourteen-year-old eighth grader; I just turned fourteen yesterday, as a matter of fact. I live in Wildwood with my mother, who owns a bridal shop with my aunt. I started living as a girl last year, after I finished the sixth grade. I've excelled in my

feminine deportment classes since I started living as Karen, after twelve years of living as Kevin, the boy I pretended to be. I plan to have my sex surgically re-assigned as early as the Christmas break, although I can put it off until next summer. I hope to join my mother and aunt in their bridal shop one day.”

A dark-haired Asian girl, five-two with an average build, followed Karen. “My name is Yoko Abe; I’m a twelve-year-old seventh grader. I just started living full-time this past summer as Yoko, after pretending to be a boy named Yukio for the first twelve years of my life. I’m originally from Osaka, Japan; my family now lives in Kansas City, where they run a Japanese restaurant. I have the most amazingly supportive family; my parents were so cool when I told them I wanted to become a girl. My aunt, who’s a psychologist, helped my parents arrange my entry into Rainbow. I look forward to my new life as Yoko; I hope to complete my transformation into a girl by the time I enter high school.”

An African-American girl, five-four with a slender build, followed Yoko. “I’m Keisha Franklin, thirteen years old and in the eighth grade. I’m originally from Memphis, Tennessee. I began life as a boy named Keith. I spent the first twelve years as someone I felt I really wasn’t. When I told my parents and sisters I wanted to become a girl, they were so supportive. My father is a psychologist in private practice; he helped get me into Rainbow after I finished the sixth grade. Next summer, I hope to have my sex-change operation; my parents are helping me with paying for it.”

Following Keisha was a willowy blonde, five-five with a slender build. “My name is Michelle Richards; I’m fourteen years old, in the eighth grade, and I’m originally from Jacksonville, Illinois. For the first eleven years of my life, I lived as a boy named Mickey. I never really felt like a boy; I lived in a house full of women. I have four older sisters; my mother has been

raising me since my father was killed in action in Afghanistan. After my father died, I told my mother and sisters I hated being a boy, and wanted to become a girl. When I was eleven, I began living at home as Michelle. I came to this school in the sixth grade; I'm planning to have my operation during the Christmas break."

A Native American girl, five-six with long, dark hair followed Michelle. "I'm Susan Bison; I'm a thirteen-year-old seventh grader from Aberdeen, South Dakota. I'm of Sioux heritage; I've just started my journey from boy to girl. For the first twelve years of my life, I was known as Stephen. My parents weren't too supportive of my desire to become a girl at first; however, one moment changed their attitude. One of their friends has a daughter who went through the same thing I'm going through. She had her gender surgically reassigned three years ago. When I finally told them I was a girl, trapped in a boy's body, my parents, along with my two older brothers and older sister, were very supportive of me. They sent me to Rainbow, and I've never been happier. I hope to complete my transition from boy to girl within the next two or three years."

The next girl to speak was a tall girl with shoulder-length brunette hair. At five-ten, she was the tallest in the group. "My name is Deborah Erickson, but you may call me Debbie. I'm fourteen years old, in the eighth grade, and spent the first twelve years of my life in Lincoln, Nebraska as a boy named David. My mother, grandmother and two of my aunts own a bridal shop. From the time I was in first grade, I knew I should have been a girl. After my parents' marriage fell apart after I finished the third grade, I began living at home as Debbie. I even modeled flower girl's gowns and dresses for my mother's bridal shop. My mother sent me to this school when I finished sixth grade. Over the summer, I went to San Francisco to

have the operation that completed my transformation from boy to girl.”

Following Deborah was a golden-haired, African-American girl, five-six with a slender, but athletic build. “My name is Camille Richardson; I’m a thirteen-year-old eighth grader. I’m originally from Southaven, Mississippi. My parents own a restaurant in Memphis, Tennessee. I started life in Senatobia as a boy named Cameron. From the time I was in pre-school, I knew I should have been a girl. My three sisters have always been very supportive of me; when my parents found out I was transgender, they sent me here to Rainbow. I am now an honor student; I hope to have my operation sometime next year.”

After Camille was an Asian girl with a slender build, long hair and five-five. “I’m Stephanie Kwan; I’m twelve years old, in the seventh grade, and originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I’m a third generation Korean-American; my grandparents came to this country during the war there. I began living full-time as a girl over the summer; for the two years prior to this past summer, I had been going to school as Seth and living at home as Stephanie. I knew I should have been a girl from the time I was two years old; my parents and three sisters are very supportive of my desire to become a girl. My two brothers need more time to adjust to having another sister. I hope to have my operation after I finish the eighth grade or my freshman year of high school.”

Stephanie was followed by a Hispanic girl with an average build, shoulder-length hair and five-seven. “My name is Juanita Sanchez; I’m thirteen years old, in the eighth grade, and originally from Tampico, in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. My family now resides in Kansas City, where my father and uncle run a Mexican restaurant. I first realized I should have been a girl when I was three years old. I spent the first

twelve years of my life as Juan, the person I felt I really wasn't. My story is similar to Stephanie's; I began going to school as Juan and living at home as Juanita when I started fifth grade. Last year, I began living full-time as a girl. My parents enrolled me at Rainbow on the recommendation of a therapist. They've been very supportive of my need to be a girl. I'm scheduled for gender reassignment surgery next summer."

When Juanita finished speaking, a girl with a slender build, five-six with shoulder-length, light brown hair spoke. She looked like the cover of a fashion magazine. "My name is Alison Philips; I'm thirteen years old and in the eighth grade. My family has just relocated to Independence, Missouri from Van Nuys, California three weeks ago. I'm a transfer from the Los Angeles campus, where I spent the seventh grade. I worked this summer as a model in Hollywood to earn enough spending money for the fall semester. I'm originally from Sherman Oaks, California. I've been living full-time as Alison for fifteen months now; I began life as a boy named Allen. I have three sisters; my entire family is supportive of my desire to become a girl. I hope to have my operation when I finish eighth grade."

An African-American girl with a medium Afro, five-five with a slender build, spoke once Alison finished speaking. "My name is Irene Charles; I'm a twelve-year-old seventh grader from University City, Missouri. My mother owns a beauty shop there; my father owns a tailor shop in Clayton with my two older brothers. My oldest sister owns a dress shop in midtown St. Louis. I knew I should have been a girl when I was two years old, when I put on a dress my oldest sister wore to a mother-daughter event when she was two years old. When I was a boy, I was known as Isaac. Last year, I started living at home as Irene. I began living full-time as Irene over the sum-

mer. My parents enrolled me at Rainbow on the recommendation of the school social worker. I hope to have my operation before I get to high school.”

The last girl was an Asian-American, five-four with her short hair done in a bob. “I’m Jolene Zhang; I’m thirteen years old; I’m in eighth grade, and I’m originally from San Francisco’s Chinatown. I’m a third-generation Chinese-American; my parents, aunt and uncle own a Chinese restaurant in Princeton, Indiana. I first realized I should have been a girl when I was three years old, when I was still living in Chinatown. I have three older sisters; they encouraged me to dress in the clothes they once wore. My parents have always been supportive, no matter what I did. Last year, I told my parents I wanted to become a girl. At the recommendation of a therapist, I was able to enroll at Rainbow. I hope to have my operation next summer.”

A moment of silence fell before I spoke. “You have provided diverse life stories here. I’m glad that you have families who are supportive of your becoming girls. There are still a number of families who won’t support their children changing genders, regardless of age. Your families have made the best decision of your lives so far by enrolling you at this school. I encourage the older girls to guide our younger girls in the finer points of their transition from boys to girls. The Rainbow School for Girls has a long tradition of having the older transgender girls mentor the younger transgender girls at all of our campuses; it’s your turn to carry on the tradition.”

I was in my office, gathering my students’ class work to be graded when one of the troubled girls came into my office. “May I have a word with you, Mr. Johnson?” she asked me. I turned around to find Christine Jordan, a high school sophomore, five-seven with long blonde hair and an athletic build, at my door.

“What is it, Christine?” I asked her.

“I have something to talk to you about. I’m sure you remember me talking to you about my younger brother, Robert,” she replied.

“I distinctly remember you talking about him.”

“Anyway, he’s right now in a foster home in Vincennes, Indiana. The courts sent him there about the same time they sent me here to Rainbow. He’s now having problems.”

“What is he having a problem with?”

“It’s his gender identity. For the past several months, he’s felt like a girl, unfairly trapped in a girl’s body. He’s eleven years old now, and he’s been living at home as a girl. He insists on being called Becky at home; I have the feeling he’s wanting to transition.”

“What grade is he in?”

“He’s in the seventh grade. He was so good in kindergarten, that he skipped first grade and went to the second grade. Did the foster parents ask the courts about this?”

“They haven’t gotten into touch with their social worker and lawyer.”

“If I were a foster parent, I would get in touch with them as soon as possible. It could very well be that what Robert needs is to transition to Becky, and this school is the best place to do it.”

“This school saved my life when my parents became involved in pornography. I was twelve years old when my parents were caught with child porn. I was starting to become somewhat of a delinquent, myself; I’m so thankful for the judge who sent me to Rainbow. It’s really opened up a whole new world; I’m sure it will open up a new world for him.”

“Has he been diagnosed with gender identity disorder?”

“He was officially given the diagnosis last week.”

“I keep in touch with his foster parents. I’ll talk to them about it.”

After Christine left to return to her dormitory room, I put my students’ work in my briefcase, walked out of my office and locked the door. It was ten minutes after five; Rebecca came up to me as I was walking toward the parking lot. “May I have a word with you?” she asked.

“What’s on your mind?” I asked her.

“Will you be able to help out at the Kick-Off Dance in two weeks?”

“I’ll have to check my schedule; I’ll let you know by the end of the week.”

“Why are you in such a hurry?”

“I’m entertaining two young ladies at six-thirty. They’re looking at the apartment across the hall from mine; it’s been vacant for the last five months.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow, then,” Rebecca said before she turned toward her office. I went straight to the parking lot to get into my car. It would take me half an hour to get back to my apartment, make dinner and start grading my students’ work. It was around six-thirty that I heard a knock at my door. My guests had arrived on time.

“Bobby Johnson?” a girl with long Brunette hair asked me.

“That would be me,” I replied.

“My name is Brenda Michaels, and this is my roommate, Christine Browne. We’re looking at the apartment across the hall from yours.”

Brenda, at five-seven with a slender build, was wearing a white blouse, pink skirt and white flats. Christine, five-nine with shoulder-length strawberry blonde hair, an athletic build, was wearing a fuchsia pantsuit and a white blouse with white flats. "What brings you to Kirkwood?" I asked them.

"Our jobs bring us here. Christine is a manager at a local bookstore. I'm a law student, interning at a law firm in Webster Groves this fall," Brenda replied.

"The bookstore I manage is not far from here," Christine added.

"What do you do for a living?" Brenda then asked.

"I teach seventh and eighth grade math at the Rainbow School for Girls in Jefferson County," I replied.

"I've heard of that school. It has a stellar reputation for its programs for troubled and transgender girls," Christine said.

"How long have you been teaching there?" Brenda asked me.

"I'm in my fourth year teaching at the school. Before that, I taught in Milwaukee for eight years, and spent seven years in Dallas before that," I replied.

"I'd take it that with all that moving, you've had trouble finding a suitable dating, let alone marriage, partner," Christine added.

"I haven't been interested in relationships for a long, long time," I admitted.

"I've known a lot of guys like that. They're not interested in relationships because of bad experiences they've had. I've known quite a few guys who have not been meeting the right kind of women. They either don't have anything in common with them, not the type of man they're looking for, too poor, too emotion-

ally unstable, too dumb...I've heard all the excuses. I've even met quite a few men who've gotten stood up on dates. The ones who get stood up usually lose interest very quickly, although I've met a few who are persistent," Brenda told me before she asked me how I lost interest in relationships.

"The main reason why I'm not interested in relationships is because I got stood up too much, especially when I was living in Milwaukee. Living in different cities also didn't allow me enough time to get to know a woman better," I replied.

"I've also lived in different cities throughout my adult life. After I graduated from Missouri State, I moved to Kansas City for a couple of years, followed by ten years in San Francisco and lived the last two years in Denver. I can understand how hard it is to meet potential dating, let alone marriage partners," Christine added.

"I'm sure you've had a difficult time getting to know a man better," I said to her.

"Bob, another reason why I've been having trouble meeting men is because I share something in common with you that most women don't share with their men. I was born a boy," Christine told me.

"I met Christine while she was still living as Christopher. We were in college at the time we met; we hung out many times. After we graduated, Christopher headed for Kansas City and I was headed for the Marine Corps. I served four years in the Marines as a clerk in the Judge Advocate General's office. I caught up with him again in San Francisco after I was discharged; by that time, he had just been diagnosed with gender identity disorder. I moved in with him and taught him the finer points of being a woman. I was with her when she had her operation in San Francisco seven years ago. Two years ago, we moved to Denver after I finished my pre-law degree at Stan-

ford. Christine's employer transferred her to St. Louis; it came at the right time, since I have just enrolled in law school," Brenda explained.

"I must say, Christine, you're a beautiful woman now," I complimented.

"Why, thank you, Bob," she said while blushing.

At five minutes before seven o'clock, a knock was heard at my front door. It was the resident manager of my apartment building, Kristen Allen. "Good evening, Mr. Johnson," she said as I opened the door.

"Come on in, Ms. Allen; Miss Michaels and Miss Browne are waiting for you," I informed her before showing her into the living room. "Brenda Michaels and Christine Browne, I'm Kristen Allen. I'd take it you're here to look at the apartment across the hall from Mr. Johnson's," she said to them.

"We're here to look at the apartment," Christine told her.

Kristen led the girls out of my apartment, and led them to the apartment across the hall from mine. At a minute past seven o'clock, I got back to grading my students' assignments. I finished grading the assignments before Kristen was done showing the apartment to Brenda and Christine. I would sit in front of the television set to watch the ball game. It was eight-thirty when Kristen returned to my apartment.

"How did you do with your sales pitch?" I asked her.

"They signed the lease just five minutes ago. They're moving in on September 8," Kristen replied.

"I'm relieved to see that the apartment has finally been leased. If it had been vacant another month, it might have turned into an eyesore," I added.

“I must say, Christine looked like she had a sweet spot for you.”

“I made her blush when I complimented her on her beauty.”

“You’ve always had a habit of complimenting the ladies.”

“You’re not kidding. There’s one thing about you I’m curious about. As nice of a guy as you are, I’m surprised no woman has put her claws in you for such a long time. I thought girls would be fighting over you.”

“I can’t see how many women avoid the nice guys, especially the ones who compliment her on her beauty, gave her flowers on the spur of the moment, took her to a nice restaurant, a good movie, dancing at a local club, walking hand-in-hand in the park...I guess I’ve been very unlucky in love.”

“So, that’s why you bury yourself in your work.”

“You called it.”

After Kristen left to return to her apartment, the phone rang. It was Rebecca. “Have you made up your mind about the Kick-Off Dance?” she asked.

“I’ll be there, Rebecca,” I replied.

“Good! Your student teacher, Jane, will also be there two weeks from this coming Saturday,” she added.

It was around ten-thirty that I was getting ready to go to bed. My phone rang again. “Bobby Johnson,” I said into the receiver.

“Mr. Johnson, this is Camille Richardson from your support group. I’m sorry to bother you this time of night, but there’s a stalker outside the dorms,” she told me.

“Have you called the Sheriff’s Department?” I asked her.

“No, we haven’t. My roommates are scared stiff. He has been looking into our dorms since nine o’clock,” she replied.

“Sit tight, Camille. Go get the therapist on duty; I’ll call the Sheriff’s Department,” I added.

I got on the phone to the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department. “This is Bobby Johnson from the Rainbow School for Girls in Dittmer. I’m calling from my apartment in Kirkwood. One of my students reported a stalker outside Dormitory Number Three at the school. He’s been there since nine o’clock tonight,” I informed the dispatcher on duty.

“There’s two cars in the area; I’ll send one over,” she replied.

I turned on my police scanner, and heard the call. Ten minutes later, I got a call from Heather Selby, the therapist on duty. She was as scared as the rest of the girls, but was calm on the phone. “Bobby, Camille Richardson told me what has transpired. The Sheriff’s deputies have arrived, and taken the three stalkers away in handcuffs,” she told me.

“So there was more than one?” I asked her.

“These three young men have been stalking the girls on campus since early this summer. Two have lengthy police records and have spent time in Juvenile Detention in St. Louis and Jefferson Counties. The one Camille caught stalking Dormitory Number Three had a run-in with the deputies in St. Francois County earlier this summer. He was caught carrying a handgun, although it was empty,” she replied with a hint of terror in her voice.

“I’m glad they’ve been caught. Did they do anything violent?”

“The only thing they did was overpower the guard, bound and gagged him to his chair at the gate.”

After finishing my conversation with Heather, I called Rebecca, and told her about the situation. “These three guys have been nothing but trouble since they started hanging around campus back in late June; all of this happened while you were on summer vacation. The leader is Bernard ‘Burt’ Kendall, seventeen years of age from House Springs. He’s served time in Juvenile Detention in St. Louis County for assault and battery; he was recently released from juvenile custody in Jefferson County after beating his ex-girlfriend.

The second person is David McLeigh, also seventeen years old, from Byrnes Mill. He served time in juvenile custody in Jefferson County for sodomy and also spent a year in Juvenile Detention in St. Louis County for statutory rape; he had sex with a thirteen-year-old girl. The youngest person of the group is Virgil Hickman, fifteen years of age, from High Ridge. He spent a night in jail in July for carrying an empty handgun around Park Hills, where his mother lives,” she explained.

“I’d take it all three come from broken homes,” I added.

“Mr. Kendall’s parents are divorced; his mother lives in House Springs with his stepfather; his father lives in Mehlville. Mr. McLeigh’s father lives in Byrnes Mill with his girlfriend; his mother lives in Spanish Lake. Mr. Hickman’s father lives in High Ridge with his stepmother.”

“These guys must really be bad news.”

“At least the girls are sleeping more soundly tonight.”

“They don’t know that half of these girls used to be boys.”

“It’s such a shame that kids who come from broken homes would resort to such things as being Peeping Toms.”

I finally got into bed around eleven-fifteen. This was the longest first day of a new academic year I ever experienced. Tomorrow would be another day.

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