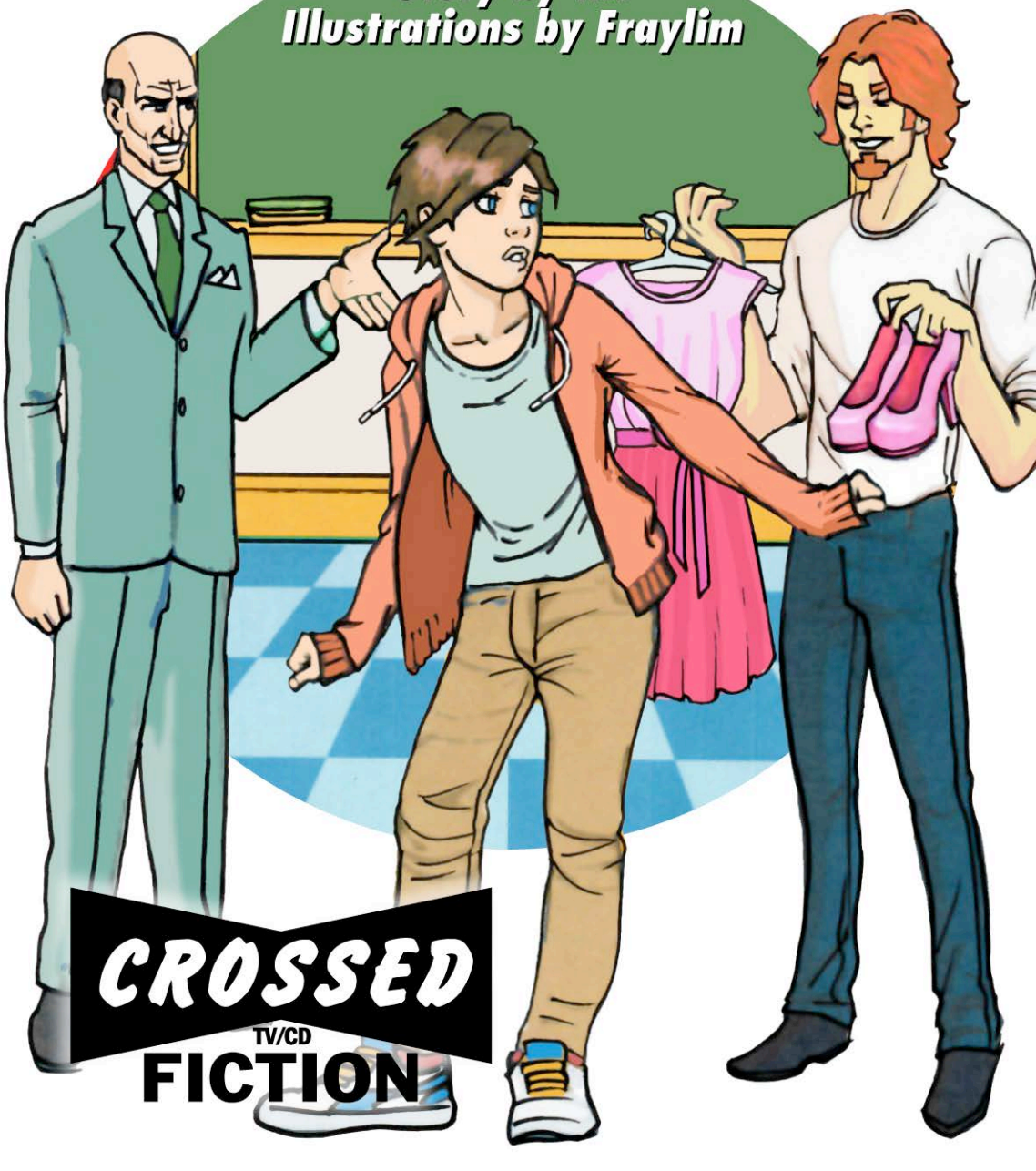
ADULTS ONLY

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THE BOY'S GUIDE TO GIRLHOOD

Story by KK
Illustrations by Fraylim



CROSSED TV/CD FICTION

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Story by KK — Illustrations by Fraylim
A Crossed Fiction Story



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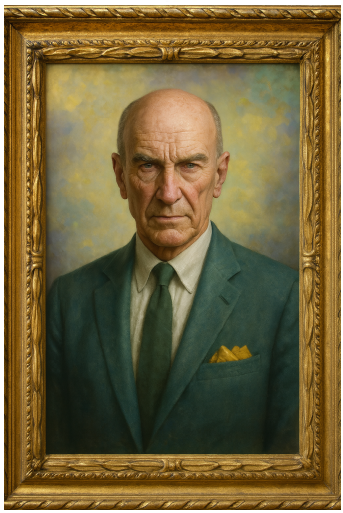
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The Boy's Guide to Girlhood



Principal Hannibal T. Buckley, the 28-year veteran leader of Faribault High School, home of the Fighting Gamecocks, was a man with a problem. Throughout his long stewardship of Faribault, in the long annals of its illustrious history, his school had been lacking in the most essential mission of its charter. The shame of Faribault cast a long shadow over his legacy, and Hannibal T. Buckley, the last caretaker of the proud Buckley family name, felt the ignominy like a broadsword thrust through his still beating heart.

Oh, the school wasn't suffering through a budget crisis. It was a steady mid-pack performer academically. The teachers did their jobs adequately enough, the students were docile and the parents rarely caused any problems. No, this was worse than all that.

The source of Principal Buckley's mortification?

The football team had never, in his 28 years, won more than two games in a season.

The Fighting Gamecocks were the perpetual cellar dwellers of the Hi-Valley Conference, and the doormat of the state double-A teams. No matter how many coaches Principal Buckley fired, no matter how much equipment he bought, no matter how much shouting he directed towards the players and coaches, no matter how much of the budget he spent building his stadium, no matter how many academic rules he broke for the players, that team just could not win if their lives depended on it.

Sadly, he knew why. His students were the biggest bunch of wimps ever assembled. The school district was full of the sons of white-collar workers who never did a day of hard work in their lives, and were adverse to breaking a sweat. His student body was made up of computer programmers, mathematicians, scientists and artists. Loafers, the whole lot of them. Loafers. That was Principal Buckley's curse.

Without the warriors he needed to truly wage warfare on the gridiron, there was no hope. He planned to retire at the end of the year, and his last chance to save his reputation was slipping through his fingers. So far, the team was 0 and 2, with eight games to go. It was his final opportunity to scale the mountain that had always thwarted him.

Yes, Buckley had far bigger concerns than the two trouble-makers waiting outside his office to be disciplined. With a sigh, he turned away from the blank spot on his wall where he had always intended to show a championship banner and cleared his throat. "Enter!" he barked, and the two students immediately slunk inside.

The first to enter was no surprise: Rex Manning, resident "bad boy" and huge pain in Principal Buckley's you-know-what. Rex had transferred to their school from New York after his parents' divorce, and he thought he was a real tough guy. Despite having only been a student there for two weeks, Buckley was rapidly becoming acquainted with him due to his tendency to get into fights and break rules. So far he seemed to be a loner, and naturally, the girls were eating it up, as if he was a character from one of their silly little romance novels. He was such a loner, he rejected them, too.

What concerned Buckley the most was that Rex was the answer he had been praying for. If Rex was on the football, team, they had a chance. All his troubles and anxieties would be gone if he could get this kid to play. He was bigger than any other student, and bigger than most of the opposing players they faced. He could plow through tacklers like a shark through the sea. His bad attitude, stoked by the flames of combat, would be an untamed force of divine vengeance. Yes, with Rex on the team, his legacy would be complete, and Buckley and his ancestors could rest in peace. However, so far, Rex had shunned every attempt the principal had made to get him to join the football team.

"Sup, Principal Buckley," Rex said thuggishly, putting his hands in his pockets and scowling.

Principal Buckley didn't deign to reply, rather instead, he narrowed his eyes and turned his attention to the next arrival. He had to admit he was slightly surprised to see who Rex's partner in crime had been. Kenny Hart, the small, skinny boy who was staring at the floor and all but shaking with fright, had never been in his office before, to the best of his memory. He was a dweeby, eager-to-please sort, who sat in the front of classes and could often be found sucking up to teachers and "cool kids" in an inane attempt to get them to like him, which naturally, always backfired. It was a strange couple, indeed.

As Principal Buckley looked down at the offense that had been committed, however, he could guess exactly what had happened. Rex, being his usual trouble-making self, had no doubt gotten his hands on a can of spray paint and decided to have a little fun. Kenny had likely walked in on it, and, seeing an opportunity to impress a "cool kid" who was too new to the school to realize that Kenny was most definitely not a "cool kid," had reluctantly agreed to go along with it. Of course, both of them had been caught in the act by the school's janitor, and now both of them were here in his office awaiting punishment.



"Well, let's see, boys," Principal Buckley said, shuffling his papers. "Vandalizing school property with inappropriate language and... Homophobic slurs?"

"We're sorry!" Kenny blurted. "Right, Rex?"

Rex gave him a look of disgust.

"How do you know we were the ones who spray painted it?" Rex asked the principal. "We just found it in there, and I saw the can, so I picked it up out of sheer curiosity."

"Right, and the spray paint on your hands was because you were so interested in the crime you had to actually touch the graffiti," Principal Buckley said dryly. Rex grimaced and reverted to his usual facial expression of scowling. Kenny, on the other hand, looked near to tears.

"You know, the players on the football team don't have these kinds of troubles," the principal said, trying to insinuate something. "If you were on the team, you'd find that these kind of issues seem to get lost and forgotten about."

"But I don't even like football!" Kenny blurted.

The principal flicked his disgusted gaze at Kenny. *Not you, you idiot,* he thought to himself. *Criminy.*

"Well, this is very serious," Principal Buckley said, as a devious idea occurred to him. "Very. Homophobic slurs are not permitted here. We are a tolerant, progressive school, and this might just constitute a hate crime." He was going to just pressure Rex into joining the team. He'd threaten to lock him up in jail unless he signed up. Strong-arm tactics were what Principal Buckley was good at.

The boys exchanged a look, and even Rex appeared slightly worried. "What do you mean, a hate crime?" he demanded.

"Well, how am I to know this slur wasn't directed at a specific homosexual student in order to intimidate and frighten them?" Principal Buckley said, leaning back in his chair and folding his arms. "Hate crimes, as you well know, are no laughing matter. I know a judge who might even want you two tried as adults."

"What?" Kenny gasped. "Are you kidding? *What* homosexual student?"

That was an issue. As far as Principal Buckley knew, none of his students identified as homosexual. Still, he was going to keep the pressure on. "I'm quite serious," Principal Buckley said, lying through his teeth. Of course, everything he was saying was ridiculous, but the boys weren't exactly legal geniuses. "Obviously we don't know how many of our students are homosexual! With you creating such an oppressive atmosphere with your graffiti, they're obviously too intimidated to come out of the closet. And Rex, with your prior record of fighting, I don't think it would be out of the question to see jail time for this."

"Bullshit," Rex blurted. "Jail time? For some graffiti? No way!"

The boy was so insolent as to actually swear in his presence, the principal thought to himself. *Imagine that kind of anger at work on the football field!* "At

the very least, I'm sure your mother would be glad to hear recommendations for military schools," Principal Buckley said. "Of course, there's a way to make all of this go away."



The principal pulled out the consent forms for joining the football team out of his desk. He filled in "Rex Manning," on them and handed them over.

Rex whisked them off the desk with a bat of his hand and they fluttered to the floor. "No way."

"I'm giving you one more chance, Rex." The principal said. "It's this or face the severe consequences of your actions."

"Wait!" Kenny suddenly piped up. "Are you trying to bribe him?"

Both Rex and the principal just ignored the skinny boy.

"I'm not joining some homo football team and dress up in your fruity little football costumes to play your gay little game."

"Rex, this is it. No more chances after this."

"Whatever."

"I'm serious!" the principal said. "This will have ramifications!"

"Yeah, sure. I'm not doing it, so bring it on."

Well, that caught Buckley off guard. He wasn't prepared to have his bluff called. "Uh... I can't guarantee there won't be a court case... But at the minimum... Three weeks of sensitivity training, served here at school." He realized that didn't sound terribly severe, but it was the standard response the district mandated for these infractions. He had to make it sound more dire than it actually did. He tried to ratchet up the tension. "In front of all your friends. Where everyone knows you're in trouble. They'll talk!"

"I don't have any friends. What kind of sensitivity training?" Rex asked, folding his arms.

"That's for me to know and you to find out," Buckley said with a mysterious smile, again failing to make it sound threatening. "Could be anything. So... Are you in or out? Play football, or three, uh... *grueling* weeks of learning to be more tolerant and accepting of *alternative lifestyles."*

"I'm so scared," Rex said. "I'll do the dumb sensitivity training. Better than dressing up for football."

"I'm giving you one more chance!" Principal Buckley said, desperately. "I'll have everything ready to go on Monday. Hours and hours of role-play. Talking and exploring your inner feelings. Day after day of it."

"Fine," Rex said.

"I like talking about my feelings!" Kenny said, excitedly.

Both teenagers hurried away, eager to be out of the principal's office, leaving Principal Buckley to clench his hands in the air in impotent frustration. *He had him,* he thought to himself. *He had that kid dead to rights! He had all the cards! He should have been the star player on the team by now!*

Perhaps, just perhaps, it was this kind of ineffective pressure and influence was the reason the Fighting Gamecocks were the worst team in the state.



As soon as they were out of sight of the principal's office, Rex gave Kenny an angry shove. "What happened to denying the whole thing, huh?" he demanded. "You cracked like an egg!"

"Aw, come on, Rex, he was never going to buy that we just 'found' the graffiti already there," Kenny whinged, rubbing his arm where Rex had struck him. "Look, we're just lucky he didn't call the cops on us!"

"Whatever, dweeb," Rex scowled. "As far as I'm concerned, this whole thing is your fault. All you had to do was keep a look-out!"

"Sorry, Rex," Kenny said, cowed. "But, I mean, the sensitivity training can't be that bad, can it? And at least we get to do it together, right? Like pals?"

"Dude, we are not friends," Rex snapped immediately. "Don't think that for a second. Now get lost!"

Totally crestfallen at yet another rejection, Kenny walked home alone. When he walked in the front door, as per usual, his family ignored him. His dad was on the phone, bossing people around as always, and his mom and older sister were in the middle of one of their usual fights. He almost wished that Principal Buckley *had* called his parents and the police — at least that way he'd be

noticed, for once. Sighing, Kenny went upstairs to his room and locked the door behind him.



Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Rex let himself into his empty house, since his single mother wasn't back from work yet. He was still fuming about getting caught — that stupid little shrimp Kenny hadn't heard the janitor approaching until it was way too late — and now he was stuck doing some kind of "learn to be nice" program for the next several weeks. It was better than football, at least. He went to his stereo system and turned up some heavy metal tunes, loud enough to shake the walls, then flopped down on the couch, glaring at the ceiling angrily. What was sensitivity training supposed to even mean, anyways? He guessed it was still better than spending a week with Kenny cleaning the whole school, which was what he'd assumed the punishment would be.



It was late that night, after Buckley finished off his Hungry Man dinner and a two cans of Old Milwaukee, that he was staring out the window into the darkness, trying to understand how he had not been able to coerce Rex into being his new star player. He could almost hear the wailing of his dear Great Grandfather as his spirit cried in anguish. If there was one thing he would do before he left this mortal coil, Hannibal T. Buckley resolved, it was to win three games this season.

Now he had been outsmarted by some dime-store thug. An attitude in shoes. He went toe-to-toe with the punk and lost.

In fact, as he thought about it, that dumb kid actually seemed to prefer taking sensitivity classes. If he had known the kind of touchy-feely balderdash that went on in those sessions, he would have surely opted for football, Buckley told himself. Actually, now that he thought about it, was it possible that Rex actually *did* prefer learning about alternative lifestyles to playing ball?

The lonely principal turned away from the window and sat down in front of his 486 desktop computer and fired it up. While it spent the next seven minutes booting, Buckley was running the conversation with Rex back and forth in his mind. He seemed awfully fixated on homosexuals. That's what he was busted for, spraying graffiti about homosexuals, and he mentioned it more than once in their talk. There was no question he was bent out of shape on the subject.

Then there was that bit about "dressing up" and "football costumes." *Great Methuselah's Ghost!* Buckley thought to himself. *It wasn't possible!* A fixation on dressing up. Preoccupied with gay issues. A loner. No girlfriend. That tough-guy exterior. It made sense to him now. He had just read an article about it in *Principal Monthly!*

Checking psychological work-ups the district provided, he brought up page after page of reference on his computer. Analysis and reports. Break-downs and summations. Psychological profiles. They all confirmed his hypothesis.

Now he knew. Now he understood *what* Rex was. *Who* he was. What was inside his *mind*. Now, he just had to use that to his advantage. If he was right — and by God, he knew he was — Buckley was going to get that lousy kid on his football team.



When Monday morning rolled around, Kenny showed up to school with a feeling of dread. He'd hoped that Rex would have cooled down a little over the weekend and been willing to commiserate together over their soon-to-be punishment, but Rex didn't so much as look at him in the hallway, leaving him to scurry to his locker alone, as per usual. As he put in his combination lock sequence and opened his locker, he was surprised to see a small pink envelope flutter out. Suspiciously, he picked it up and opened it quickly, shielding it from view with his hand. What he read made his eyes widen.

Welcome to Principal Buckley's 3-Week Pro-Awareness Program for Tolerance of Alternative Sexual Lifestyles.

Kenny winced. What on Earth was this supposed to be? He was making it sound like he was some kind of crazy bigot! Sure, Rex's graffiti had included a few gay slurs, but those were among plenty of other, more equal-opportunity curse words as well. It wasn't as if they'd done anything actually homophobic.

He kept reading, frown deepening with each sentence.



In order to move towards a position of tolerance and understanding for people of alternative sexuality, you must first gain empathy for their lifestyle. Many students express their sexuality through their dress, grooming habits, and general appearance, even though it may draw the ire of their peers. In order to gain empathy for their struggle for self-expression, you will report to the cosmetology classroom at the end of school today for a full makeover. Attendance is mandatory, and attempting to no-show will result in serious (jail-related) consequences.

Kenny gulped. He definitely did not like the sound of some kind of "makeover" in the cosmetology classroom, but he was even less thrilled by the idea of ending up in jail over some graffiti. He had a feeling that with his small stature and delicate looks, he would be getting a "pro-awareness" program of another kind entirely. He read to the bottom of the letter and grimaced at what he saw next.

The cosmetology students who have kindly volunteered to help you are unaware that you are being punished, and you will not, under any circumstances, dispel assumptions they might make about your sexuality based on the makeover you have requested.

Kenny stuffed the letter back into his locker and took out his books for his first period class, trying to put the impending appointment out of his mind.

However, that soon proved to be impossible. Kenny spent all day in a state of total distraction, dreading what was to come, and when the final bell rang he made his way towards the cosmetology classroom as if he were a condemned

man going to the gallows. He met Rex on the way, who, to his surprise, didn't look particularly worried.

"How bad do you think this whole makeover thing is going to be?" Kenny asked worriedly.

"Makeover thing?" Rex demanded. "What are you talking about?"

"Didn't you read the letter?" Kenny asked, raising his eyebrow.

"Nope," Rex said, putting his hands in his pockets. "But Principal Buckley just intercepted me on my way out the back and told me I was getting a free haircut, or something dumb like that."

Before Kenny could reply, they arrived at the door of the cosmetology classroom, which was promptly opened by a pair of grinning cosmetology students. "Cool!" one of them chirped. "The volunteers are here! Thanks for letting us practice on you guys."

"Uh, no problem," Rex said, giving the pretty girl a suave grin. "You can practice on me any time, babe."

The girl giggled, then showed them inside. There were two salon chairs awaiting them in front of the mirrors. Rex hopped into the first one with little hesitation, spinning in a little circle, while Kenny reluctantly sat down in the second one. "You must be Kenny, right?" one of the girls asked, draping a cape around him. Kenny sighed.

"Yeah, and you're Brenda," he said. "We've been in the same class since, like, grade school."

"Of course," Brenda said sweetly. "Well, Kenny, you must have been planning this 'new look' for quite some time. You sent us just a ton of examples! Don't worry, I think you'll look really good."

"Uh, thanks?" Kenny said, now more worried than ever.

"Now just sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride," she said, smiling.



An hour later, Kenny was finally faced with his reflection in the mirror. His mouth fell open when he saw what they'd done to him. He'd been more than a little worried, especially by the ear piercing gun and eyebrow tweezers, but his hair... The back and sides of his head had been cut very short, practically buzzed clean, while they'd used the length on top to create a huge mass of curls in a men's bouffant style. Maybe a more manly and rugged specimen could have gotten away with such a haircut, provided they were European and very metrosexual, but on Kenny, with his manicured eyebrows, total lack of facial hair, and newly-pierced ears, there was no denying it looked extremely, totally...

"Fabulous!" Brenda sang. "Don't you think? We nailed it, right?"



On the chair beside him, he could hear Rex sniggering. By comparison, he had gotten off lightly. His new haircut was a bit on the "metro" side, but they'd only plucked a few hairs off his eyebrows and even with one of his ears pierced, he still managed to pull off the look without compromising his masculinity. In fact, Kenny doubted anyone would even notice it in school the next day. His own haircut was another story entirely, and how was he supposed to explain it away to his parents?

The two boys left the cosmetology classroom, Kenny stumbling out in a state of shock, Rex swaggering as per usual, with Brenda's phone number, which had been pressed into his hand.

"How am I supposed to go to school like this tomorrow?" Kenny wailed, as soon as they were out of earshot. "I look like a total..."

"I suggest you don't finish that sentence, young man," boomed the authoritative voice of Principal Buckley. Both boys turned around to see the principal standing there with several large shopping bags in tow. "Well,

cosmetology has done an excellent job on you both. A-plus material. Now, all you need is wardrobe."

"Hold on," Rex said suspiciously. "I'm not dressing up like a fruitcake just to learn a lesson about not using slurs in my graffiti."

"The fact that you consider it okay to use the term 'fruitcake' in a derogatory manner tells me you definitely need to learn this lesson," Principal Buckley frowned. "But maybe you'd like to actually see my selections before you make me rescind my offer of an alternative to *jail*?"

"Uh, point taken," Rex muttered, taking the offered bag and peering inside. To his relief, all he found were a few V-neck T-shirts in a slightly tighter style than he usually wore, and some skinny jeans that were currently fashionable no matter one's sexual orientation. "Alright, fine," Rex said. "So us getting haircuts and wardrobe adjustments is supposed to make us realize what it's like to be gay?"

"Gay? No, no. That's not what this is about. And this is just step number one," Principal Buckley said, with a mysterious smile. "Remember, this is only the first week of three." He handed Kenny the other shopping bag and marched away.

"How come my hair had to get bleached?" he whined, as soon as the principal was out of earshot. "And how come you only had to get one ear pierced?"

"Don't ask me," Rex said, snorting. "Maybe they had to work harder to counteract your natural manliness."

"Very funny," Kenny said darkly. "You're just going to look like you started reading GQ, I'm going to look like I read... I dunno, Cosmo!" He peered inside the bag, hoping to find something similar to what Rex had been given. Instead, his face blanched. "Aw, no way," he muttered.

"What?" Rex demanded, with a spiteful grin. "Let me see! We're in this together, remember?"

"Yeah, right," Kenny yelped, trying to hold the bag out of sight, but Rex quickly and easily wrestled it from him and removed its contents. Like Rex, he had been given several V-neck shirts, but with some clear differences. His had a much deeper neckline, were mostly in bright, feminine colors like pink or baby blue, and some of them, at least to his eye, appeared as if they wouldn't even cover his belly button. He was supposed to wear a crop-top to school! And the pants that accompanied the shirts were even worse, a pair of tight white capris in a distinctly effeminate style. Lastly, there were a pair of cork sandals, that, unless he was very much mistaken, had a bit of a lift to them.

"Somebody is going to look *faaabulous* tomorrow," Rex snickered. "Definitely goes with your new 'look,' doesn't it?"

"I can't wear this stuff!" Kenny gasped. "I'll be the laughing stock of the school! Everyone will think that I'm... That I'm..."

"That's the point, genius," Rex said. "Bet you wish you weren't such a big homophobe now, huh?"

"You know I'm not," Kenny protested hotly. "And neither are you! This punishment doesn't fit the crime at all. We should be, I dunno, scrubbing graffiti off a neighborhood wall."

"I'll take a little lecturing and some free shirts that show off my muscles over that any day," Rex grinned. "See you in school tomorrow, princess."

Rex swaggered off towards the exit, leaving Kenny holding his new outfit with an expression of horror and displeasure. He'd only been the look-out, so why was he getting the worst of the punishment?



When Rex sauntered into the house with his new haircut and a bag of clothes, his mom barely batted an eye. "I like it," she said. "And the earring is very modern. Now, do you want frozen pizza or frozen lasagna?"

"Neither," Rex snapped. "How about you actually cook for once?"

"Well, excuse me, but after a long day of work I don't always have the energy to cook for my ungrateful lazy-ass of a son!" she snapped back. "I won't even bother asking how much you spent on new clothes when I'm barely paying the rent as it is."

"I didn't pay a cent, for your information!" Rex barked.

"Rex Manning, have you been shoplifting again?" his mother demanded, her eyes widening.

"That's for me to know and you to find out," Rex said in a mysterious voice, copying Principal Buckley's statement from earlier. Satisfied that he had managed to get under her skin, he headed up to his room and slammed the door shut for some privacy. Throwing himself onto the bed, he couldn't help but think about what Kenny had been stuck with. Boy, that was going to be something to see in person.

On the other side of town, Kenny, who was much less enthusiastic about the contents of his shopping bag, was just stepping inside. He'd stuffed the new clothes into his backpack and had managed to more or less hide his new haircut and earrings under a hooded sweatshirt. As he closed the door behind him, his older sister Sara waltzed by without even acknowledging his existence — so far, so good.

"Why so late, honey?" his mom asked, bustling out of the kitchen. "Were you at a friend's house?" she asked hopefully, knowing full well that Kenny was not exactly overloaded with friends to hang out with after school.

"Uh, no, I stayed late to help with a... Project," Kenny said evasively.

"Oh?" his mom questioned. "For what class?"

"Cosmetology," Kenny mumbled, hoping his mom wouldn't hear him. "Well, gotta go do homework, bye!" He raced up the stairs before she could ask him anymore questions. Once he was in the sanctuary of his room, Kenny dropped his hood and inspected the damage again in his mirror. The hairstyle was bad enough, but together with the studs winking from his earlobes and his newly-thinned eyebrows, it was unmistakably a very effeminate, girly-boy look. What were his parents going to say? Worried by their reaction, he was unable to concentrate on his homework, and when his mom finally called him to the dinner table he could barely bring himself to walk down the stairs. He drew the strings of his hooded sweatshirt tighter, knowing it was his only hope to avoid detection.

"Home-made lasagna!" his mom chirped. "This used to be your favorite when you were little, you know, Kenny."

"Wasn't it Sara's favorite?" his dad said quizzically, putting his phone away.

"Oh, that's right, it was Sara's favorite," his mom corrected. "So what was Kenny's favorite?"

His dad gave a helpless shrug, then, just as Kenny was sliding into place at the table, reached over and grabbed his hood. "Hey, no hats at dinner," he said. "You know the rules, Kenny, and...." He trailed off at the sight of his son's transformed appearance. "Oh," he managed. "A... A haircut."

"So you *did* say cosmetology!" Kenny's mom said triumphantly. "Was this for, um, extra credit, or something? I didn't even know you were in cosmetology."

"I'm not," Kenny sighed. "They needed volunteers, and, well..."

"You got your ears pierced?" his dad demanded, noticing for the first time. "Jeez, Kenny, isn't that a little... A little much? You look..."

"Stylish!" his mom interjected hastily, shooting her husband a warning look. "It's an interesting style experiment. Experimenting is totally natural."

Before Kenny could open his mouth to make up a better excuse, his sister strode into the room, and, upon seeing her younger brother, nearly bust her gut laughing. "Oh my god, you volunteered for the cosmetology girls, didn't you?" she demanded. "They really did a number on you! Let me get a picture!" She stuck out her phone and clicked several photos. "You even let them pierce your ears and pluck your eyebrows? Wow, Kenny. This is a new low in the sucking up to girls department."

"Ahem, let's just sit down and have dinner, alright?" their dad said loudly. "It's not a big deal. I'm sure if you don't like it, they'll buzz it off for free."

"Yeah," Kenny muttered vaguely, knowing he wouldn't be allowed to buzz it off until his three weeks of sensitivity training was complete, no doubt. He ate

his food as quickly as possible, then retreated back to his room before his sister could start teasing him again. Not long after, he was surprised by a knock on the door and his dad's voice.

"Hey, son, can I come in?" he asked.

"Uh, sure," Kenny said.

"Thanks," his dad muttered, walking in as he opened the door. "Look, Kenny, I know sometimes you don't get a lot of attention around here, so if this new haircut of yours is a way of acting out...?"

"It's not that," Kenny said hastily.

"Then, uh, is there anything you want to tell me?" his dad asked awkwardly. "I mean, I know you haven't had any girlfriends, but I sort of just assumed you were a late bloomer. If it's something else..."

"No!" Kenny protested, going beet red. For several moments he desperately wanted to tell his dad the truth, but that would mean admitting he'd been Rex's accomplice in the graffiti, and that would lead to the kind of attention Kenny absolutely didn't want — he'd seen his older sister punished harshly for far less by being grounded and having her stuff taken away. "It's just a new style I'm trying out, that's all," Kenny said at last.

"Okay," his dad said, obviously relieved. "Great. I'm glad we had this open discussion about it. Goodnight, Kenny."

"Goodnight, dad," Kenny said. As soon as his dad was out of the room, he sighed. Well, that had gone about as well as he could have hoped. The real challenge was on its way in the morning.



As tolerant as his dad had been the night before, Kenny still received an expression of befuddlement that lasted a good ten seconds when he came down the stairs wearing his new outfit. Kenny had considered playing sick and staying home from school, but, knowing he would have to face the music eventually, he eventually picked out the least-awful shirt (powder blue with a deep V-neck, but not too tight and not one of the ones that exposed his belly-button) and put on the white capris to go with it. With the whole ensemble, with the haircut, earrings, and sandals and all, to say he looked a little effeminate would be an understatement — he looked absolutely ragingly, flamboyantly gay and not afraid to show it.

"Part of the new style?" his dad asked weakly, as his sister walked in and nearly dropped her toast. Rather than bursting into laughter again, she gave him a quizzical look, then complimented him on putting together a matching outfit.

"Seriously," she said. "It looks, um, nice on you."

"Thanks," Kenny said suspiciously, still unsure if she was making fun of him or not. His mom took the whole thing like a champ, merely complimenting him on looking "put together, for once", whatever that meant, before handing him his breakfast and admonishing him not to miss the bus. With a deep feeling of dread in the pit of his stomach, Kenny grabbed his backpack and set off for the bus stop, his mind racing a mile a minute as he wondered how people would react to his clothes and haircut. The first hurdle was relatively easy, because the grumpy bus-driver didn't even look up at him as he climbed aboard. He was quick to grab a seat right at the front, sitting down as low as possible in the seat and hoping the top of his bleached hair wasn't visible.

Once he actually arrived at his high-school, however, hiding was impossible. Nearly the second he stepped inside, he could feel people staring at him in curiosity. Every time he heard someone laugh, he jumped, thinking they were laughing at him, and he avoided all eye contact as he made his way to and from class. Most people were too surprised to really formulate a question, not knowing whether to tease him about his hair, his earring, or his new fashion choices. He managed to keep his head down and avoid speaking to anybody in his first couple classes, but he knew it couldn't last. At lunch, he was going to have to walk through the whole cafeteria, and everyone was going to see him. The prospect was so unpleasant that he nearly skipped lunch altogether, but his hunger eventually steered him into the cafeteria line. He did his best to keep his eyes down as he stood in line, still waiting for someone to come up and shove him into a locker, or something, but it never came. Maybe Principal Buckley's tolerance policy had had more of an effect than he realized...

Still, it wasn't going to make finding a table any easier. Kenny lifted up his cafeteria tray, took a deep breath, and arrived at the moment he'd been so horribly dreading. As he turned around, it felt like more or less the entire school was staring at him in concert. Normally Kenny tried to hang around the jocks' table at lunch — sometimes they let him sit with them if he bought them all sodas — or else with the cool skateboarder types, who only allowed him in to make fun of him. Usually he ended up at the very edge of the band geek's table, or else the nerds, neither of which group liked him all that much either, since he was always sucking up to the cooler kids.

But now, he knew without a shadow of a doubt that he wouldn't be welcomed at any of those tables without someone asking the obvious, and that was one thing Kenny didn't think he could bear. Instead, keeping his head down, he slowly walked to the far end of the cafeteria and sat down by himself at the only unoccupied table, face burning with embarrassment. He imagined he could feel the concentrated stares of his classmates, and even hear a few snickers, as he slowly began to eat, resigning himself to at least the next week spent as a self-exiled social outcast until he could ditch his new "look." Didn't Principal Buckley realize this was the sort of thing that could haunt him until graduation?

"Sup," came a half-hearted grunt. Kenny looked up, and was shocked to see Rex, who usually spent lunch hour in the parking lot smoking cigarettes, throwing down his tray onto the table across from Kenny's own.

"H-hey, Rex," Kenny stammered. "I was just waiting for a couple friends, but they got, uh, sick, so..."

"Whatever," Rex said bluntly. "Principal Buckley intercepted me on my way out, apparently eating together is a mandatory part of our rehabilitation thing."

"Oh," Kenny said, staring down at his plate. For several minutes they ate in silence, then finally Rex sighed.

"This cafeteria food is crap," he said. "Wish they had curly fries every day."

"Me too," Kenny said, hopeful that maybe Rex hadn't written him off completely after all. He gave a hesitant smile. Rex didn't return it, but his face did soften into a slightly less angry look, which Kenny figured was about as much as he could hope for. Maybe, just maybe, this whole debacle would end up making the two of them friends through adversity?



As the week went on, and Kenny continued wearing his new wardrobe to school, and both he and Rex continued sitting together during lunch, it didn't take long for the rumors to start flying fast and thick. Kenny had never been the center of so much attention before, and it was almost kind of nice to be talked about for once, even if the subject was whether or not he was gay.

By the end of the week on Friday, the school had seemed to reach a consensus, because a big pack of girls, including Stephanie, the cheerleader, and Brenda, the cosmetology student, came over to his locker to congratulate him on "coming out."

"I had no idea," Stephanie admitted. "I mean, I totally should have guessed. Looking back on it, the signs were all there! We're all supporting you one-hundred percent, and you should totally hang out with us this weekend, right girls?"

"Definitely!" they all chimed in. One of them started to giggle uncontrollably, then asked, "So, we see you hanging out with Rex Manning a lot. Is he... Are you two... You know..."

"No!" Kenny blurted, blushing beet red. "I mean, uh, no. We're not... Dating. We're just friends. Barely."

"I get it," Stephanie said with a knowing wink. "Nothing official, right, girls?" They all tittered. "But he's a real dream," she continued. "I'm so sad he's gay! Is him showing up the reason you wanted to come out?"

"It's... Definitely related," Kenny said evasively.



"My gaydar is not worth a penny," one of the girls sighed. "I had no idea you were gay, and I definitely had no idea Rex was."

"Are you sure he doesn't swing both ways?" Brenda asked hopefully. "Because I gave him my phone number, and..."

"Oh, no," Kenny said, with an evil grin, seeing an opportunity for a little payback. "Rex is as gay as they come, trust me." He gave her what he hoped was a knowing wink.

"Well, if you can drag yourself away from him for an evening, we're having a little get-together on Saturday," Brenda said with a sigh. "Do you want to come?"

"Oh, I don't know if I'll have time," Kenny said evasively, dreading the prospect of spending an evening talking about Rex's muscles with a bunch of girls who thought he was gay. "I'll let you know, though."

"Cool!" one of the other girls chirped. "See you around, girlfriend!" They bustled away, leaving Kenny with a grimace. Girlfriend? Really?

"Making new friends already, I see," came a gruff, authoritative voice from behind him. Kenny spun around and saw Principal Buckley standing there, holding another pink envelope. "I'd suggest you take them up on that offer. It can count towards your extracurricular training."

"Extracurricular training?" Kenny echoed, eyeing the envelope suspiciously.

"That's right," Principal Buckley said. "Homosexual individuals don't simply stop being gay on the weekends, now, do they? That's why, starting this weekend, you will have various extracurricular activities to complete. This Saturday, for instance, you and your partner ... in crime ... have an appointment at the salon for a manicure, pedicure, and waxing. Also a massage — thank me later."

"You made us a salon appointment?" Kenny gasped. "Like, as a couple?"

"Correct," Principal Buckley said. "And afterwards, I expect you to log at least three hours together at the mall. That time should be spent discussing your homophobic behavior and what you've learned so far in the pro-awareness program, patent pending."

"But people I know go to that mall!" Kenny said, wheels turning furiously inside of his mind. "They'll see us and assume..."

"People make assumptions all the time," Principal Buckley said. "It's an unfortunate fact gay students often have to deal with. Well, enjoy your weekend, Kenny." The principal walked away, already shouting at a pair of students who were rough-housing in the hallway.

Kenny shook his head. Sure, Rex had agreed to wear some tight T-shirts and eat lunch with a sissy-looking Kenny, but actually being seen together in public? At a salon?

"No way is Rex going to go for this," Kenny muttered. "No flipping way."



Despite Kenny's earlier doubts, Rex was waiting outside the mall at the theater entrance when Kenny showed up on Saturday, having gotten a ride from his sister, who now firmly believed that Kenny was gay and had been in denial all these years. The rebellious Rex was wearing a huge scowl, and before Kenny could so much as say hello, he started to rant.

"I told Buckley there was no way I was going to a salon, and then when I got home, I found a message waiting on the phone telling my mom about the graffiti, and a stack of brochures on my lawn for military schools, to boot!" Rex fumed. "He's blackmailing me, and trying to intimidate me, that bastard!"

"Wow, yeah, what an, um, a bastard," Kenny blurted, trying to sound equally angry about it. "Who just drives around to students' houses leaving brochures on the lawn, right?"

"Shut up, Kenny," Rex snapped, leading the way into the mall towards the salon. "Don't think I've forgotten this is all your fault to start with. I can't believe I have to spend my weekend hanging around with a dweeb like you."

"Sorry," Kenny muttered, slightly hurt, rubbing his arm nervously. "Did you have big plans, or something?" Rex opened his mouth, as if to speak, but then

closed it firmly with what seemed to be just a hint of an embarrassed flush on his cheeks. Maybe being the cool, rebellious kid in school hadn't made him as many friends as he pretended?

"Yeah," Rex finally said loudly. "Big plans." Kenny only nodded his head, but he had an inkling of a suspicion that Rex was not being entirely truthful, and it made him feel slightly better about himself. Misery loves company, after all, he thought to himself.

"Well, it's just for today," Kenny pointed out. "So, let's, you know, get it over with, right?"

"Right," Rex grumbled. "After you." He shoved the door of the salon open, peering inside as if it were a lion's den, and Kenny reluctantly stepped through it. Inside was a very sleek, clean, and modern-looking establishment with several pretty girls in professional-looking smocks bustling around. The one at the desk gave them a welcoming smile.

"You must be Rex and Kenny," she beamed. "You're right on time. Let's see, we have you down for a manicure, pedicure, waxing, exfoliation, and couple's massage. Does that sound right?"

"C-couple's massage?" Kenny stammered, as Rex was too aggrieved to speak. "We're not... It's not..."

"Let's call it a double massage, then," the receptionist smiled. "But please do know that our establishment is extremely welcoming of alternative sexualities."

"I'm *not* gay," Rex said, very quietly, so only Kenny could hear him.

"What was that?" the receptionist asked Rex, picking up on the sound.

"Nothing," Rex grumbled.

"All right then. Shall we get started?" Kenny shot a look at Rex, who was still gobsmacked, and nervously cleared his throat.

"Uh, yeah," he said. "That would be great."

The receptionist snapped her fingers, and an instant later another cosmetician appeared to lead them over to a pair of leather-backed salon-chairs. First were the manicures and pedicures, and although both boys were extremely embarrassed and nervous, both found themselves relaxing slightly as the procedure went on. There was nobody else in the salon save for them, and it was a nice feeling having one's feet and hands soaked, exfoliated, and moisturized. It turned out that Kenny's nails were in worse shape than Rex's, as he bit them constantly, and Rex glared daggers when one of the girls complimented him on his well-trimmed nails. Both of them were given a simple clear coating that was supposed to strengthen the keratin, and although it was slightly shiny in the light, both were assured it would dry clear.



Of course, with the comfortable experience of the manicure and pedicure lowering their guards, Kenny and Rex were not prepared for what was to come on the waxing table...

"Yowch!" Rex yowled, as the first strip was yanked away from his hairy chest.

"Owwwch!" Kenny yelped, as he got his first taste of the discomfort as the wax coating his left underarm was ripped off.

"I have to say, I'm a little surprised neither of you boys have ever tried waxing before," the cosmetician said, raising a skeptical eyebrow as she tossed a used strip of wax into the garbage. "Let's try not to make so much noise, okay?"

Rex and Kenny gritted their teeth as they laid flat on the twin waxing tables, facing away from each other and unable to see what the other was undergoing. By the time they were finished, both of them were bright red from embarrassment, and, more importantly, from the thorough waxing. Rex marveled at the bizarre feel of his denuded chest, legs, and armpits. He'd been a hairy guy since junior high school, more or less, and it was a shock to the system to lose it all in one go. He almost felt like he was a kid again, or something.

As they made their way to the massage room, towels wrapped around their waists, Rex couldn't help but notice that Kenny was walking funny, almost waddling. "Why are you walking like that?" he demanded.

"Why aren't you?" Kenny demanded, in a voice that was clearly holding back tears. "I am never doing that ever again! It took me forever to grow that stuff, and now..."

"Hold on," Rex grinned incredulously. "They waxed your junk?"

"They didn't wax yours?" Kenny demanded, mouth falling open in indignation and rage. "She said 'full body' means 'full body' and..."

"They did your butthole, too?" Rex guffawed. "Like, your whole crack?"

"Shut up!" Kenny snapped, but the blush on his cheeks made the truth quite obvious. Rex was still sniggering as they entered the massage room and were each directed to a separate massage pad. Kenny, whose ears were bright red with embarrassment, refused to make any conversation, but once again, despite himself, he found the massage quite relaxing and enjoyable, even more so with his newly-hairless skin being so sensitive to the touch. Rex tried to reclaim some semblance of his manliness by hitting on his pretty masseuse, but she just giggled and didn't seem to take him very seriously.

When they were finally back in their own clothes and ready to leave the salon, Kenny had a momentary panic about payment, but it turned out Principal Buckley had put it all on his tab. Surprised by the generosity, and feeling good from the massage, both boys exited the salon in a state closer to tranquility than they had experienced in quite some time.

"Well, we have another hour to log," Rex said. "I got a timesheet in my envelope and it says when we're done with the salon we can go to Smoothie King. Maybe that's paid for, too."

"You're not worried about people seeing us, uh, together?" Kenny said awkwardly.

"Just try not to act like a fag," Rex sighed. "And it's not like I've got a reputation built up here I need to protect. Who cares what a bunch of small-town idiots think, anyway?"

"Right," Kenny said, unaware that he had been lumped in with the small-town idiots. He was too busy wondering why Rex had been given a timesheet and places to go together instead of him. It was almost like Rex was taking him on a date. Kenny flushed at the thought.

When they got to the smoothie place, both boys made a bee-line for a back booth well away from the windows that showed the busy mall. Kenny had managed not to see anybody he knew yet, and Rex, despite his bold words, clearly wasn't too keen on running into classmates, either. Both of them ordered large strawberry smoothies, and the waiter didn't so much as blink an eyelash.

For a while they sucked at their straws in silence, but eventually Rex started calling Principal Buckley names again, and Kenny was happy to join in without being rebutted. He even made Rex chuckle once when he described Principal Buckley's wart problem that was common knowledge to most of the school. Maybe it wasn't too late to end up friends with Rex, Kenny thought, as the other boy departed to the bathroom. Maybe, paradoxically, Principal Buckley was actually doing him a favor.

His train of thought was totally interrupted, however, when a muscular, tough-looking young hoodlum got up from a nearby table and strolled over, hands in his pockets and a scornful expression on his face. "You're suckin' that straw pretty good," he said. "I bet you get a lot of practice, right? Little cutie like you."

Kenny froze, completely unable to form a response. Was he about to get beaten up? He started to instinctively push the rest of the smoothie away, but the brawny teenager pushed it back towards him, simultaneously sitting down in the booth as he did so. "No, no, no, cutie, you got it all wrong," he said. "I like watching you work those hot little lips of yours. Keep sucking on it."

"Just, just leave me alone," Kenny said tremulously, trying to stand up, but he found his path blocked by the older boy's arm.

"I said, keep sucking on it, cutie," he said threateningly. Kenny's eyes widened. He looked around in fright, but the few other customers in sight were studiously looking away, avoiding all eye contact with him, obviously not wishing to entangle themselves in the situation.

"I'm not gay," Kenny said, flushing.

"I'm not, either," the teenaged hoodlum said menacingly. "You trying to say something, you little fairy boy? You trying to call *me* a faggot? With you



mincing around here in your cute little outfit and your pierced ears and your hair and nails?"

"N-no," Kenny stammered.

"Then keep drinking your drink," the boy grinned. "Nice and slow. I don't think you need to use your hands, either. Or do you want me to beat you up instead?" Feeling noxious with fear and anxiety, and his face burning with shame, Kenny slowly did as requested, leaning forward to suck on the straw but leaving his hands in his lap. "Where's the enthusiasm, cutie?" the hoodlum asked. "I want to see you bobbing up and down on that thing. See, I'm no fag, but I like getting a little on the side from a good little cocksucker, that's all. And you would hit the spot, let me tell you."

Kenny gulped, searching desperately for an escape route, when all of a sudden the boy doubled over in pain.

"I like kicking the shit out of wannabe tough guys like you on the side," Rex said, pulling his fist back from the hoodlum's stomach. "How about you go walk that one off and stop bothering my friend, huh?"

The boy scowled furiously, but there were tears smarting in his eyes from Rex's blow, and it only took a few seconds of sizing up Rex's superior height and muscles to make him decide to make a break for it, hurrying away, still clutching his stomach.

"Shit," Kenny gasped. "Thanks, Rex. I think he was... He was going to... Did you say friend?"

"Don't get excited," Rex grumbled. "It was just to make the one-liner sound better."

"But you said it," Kenny argued. "So..."

"Jesus, let it go already," Rex snapped. "We're not friends, okay? We're never going to be friends. Get that into your head. Guys like me are not friends with spineless little wimps like you. I never should have asked you to be a look-out. I could tell right away you didn't have the balls."

Kenny sat back quietly, staring down at the table. There was a long silence between them until Kenny's cell phone rang unexpectedly. Puzzled by a number he didn't recognize, he picked it up, glad for an excuse to ignore Rex. He was surprised to hear the voice of Stephanie the cheerleader.

"Hey, Kenny, I got your number from your sister," she chirped. "Are you coming tonight, or what?" Kenny looked across at Rex coldly.

"Sure," he said. "I'm just at the mall. Can you pick me up?"

"Of course, girlfriend," Stephanie sang. "Are you shopping? Meet us at the food court entrance, okay?"

"Okay," Kenny said, trying to sound equally cheerful. "See you."

"See you soon! Bye," Stephanie said, then hung up.

"You're seriously going?" Rex asked skeptically.

"To hang out with a bunch of hot, popular cheerleaders?" Kenny snapped. "Yeah, I am. Because I can tell when people want to be my friend, and I can appreciate it. Have fun being a pissed-off loner for the rest of your life."

With that parting shot, Kenny threw his smoothie into the trash, got up, and marched out of the establishment, blissfully unaware of how much it looked like he'd just had a lover's spat with his boyfriend. Rex sat back with a deep scowl on his face. He supposed he couldn't blame Kenny for getting a dig in, after all, he'd been a little harsher than usual on the dweeb. But seeing Kenny let another guy totally own him and humiliate him like that without putting up a fight made it clear Kenny was not friend, or even side-kick, material. Although he couldn't help but remember how good it had felt to hit that punk who'd been bothering him and see Kenny look up at him with that expression of awe and gratefulness on his face, his eyes wide as if he had just seen Superman in action. And even more so, maybe part of the reason Rex had come down so hard was because he was angry at himself for not stepping in

sooner. He'd watched the punk tease and humiliate Kenny, and for some reason, watching Kenny submissively leaning forward to wrap his pouty lips around that straw had been... Exciting?

Rex wasn't gay — no way, he told himself, he was straight as a board, and he'd done stuff with plenty of chicks — but Kenny hadn't looked like a guy, not in profile with his diamond earring twinkling in the light, his dainty little nose and soft lips and long lashes. No, he'd looked like a girl with a weird haircut, and a cute one, at that. Rex angrily tossed his smoothie into the garbage and got up, determined to go home and pump some iron to put it out of his mind.



As soon as Stephanie and Brenda picked Kenny up outside the food court, they immediately complimented him on his manicure.

"Somebody hit the salon!" Brenda giggled. "Nice nails."

"Thanks," Kenny said weakly. "I didn't realize it was so... noticeable."

"They'd be even more noticeable with some nice glittery nail polish," Stephanie pointed out. "We're doing our nails tonight, and you're joining in, okay?"

"Uh, I think the clear coat is enough for me..." Kenny said evasively.

"No way!" Brenda said. "Come on, it'll be fun! Are you worried someone will tease you?"

"Because now you have big strong Rex to protect you," Stephanie giggled. Kenny blushed furiously, immediately thinking back to the confrontation at the smoothie shop. There was no way they could know what had happened, but they had struck a sensitive spot all the same!

"I think Rex will like it," Brenda pointed out. "You're definitely the femmy one in the relationship, it's kind of obvious... His biceps are amazing, I bet he can just throw you down on the bed and..." She trailed off dreamily, obviously fantasizing about Rex.

"Knock it off!" Kenny pleaded, red in the face as a tomato would be. "I'll let you do my nails if you quit bugging me about Rex! I told you, we're not dating!"

"Touchy, touchy," Stephanie grinned. "Okay, fine, no more teasing. Just relax and have fun with us. Have you met the rest of the cheer squad? There's Brittany, Stacy, Marsha..."

The "girls' night" turned out to be taking place at Marsha's house, a very expensive house in the suburbs, and when they arrived there, she greeted each of them with an excited hug — Kenny included. It was quite a strange experience to have a cheerleader actually happy to see him, rather than looking at him like slime or ignoring him completely, but he thought maybe he could

get used to it... Especially since Marsha had the nicest rack of any girl on the cheerleading squad.

As she led them into the living room, Kenny was met with the sight of a bunch of pretty teenaged girls engaged in a flurry of feminine activity, doing their hair, painting each others' nails, and speaking a mile a minute. A few of them gave Kenny suspicious looks, but the majority of them were happy to finally have a "gay best friend" in their midst, and immediately began asking him for his opinion on various outfits and hairstyles. Kenny, of course, had very little knowledge of fashion, but he gave his honest opinions and the girls seemed to be paying good attention to it. Before long, he found himself having his nails painted a glittery pink shade, reasoning that he could take it off later, while he listened in on the latest gossip and high school who's who. The girls were growing increasingly giggly, and Kenny was hoping for some sort of underwear-clad pillow-fight, when Stephanie teasingly held up a dress to him.

"Ooh, have you ever thought about doing drag?" she demanded. "You have great bone structure and you're so skinny, I bet you'd make a really hot girl!"

"No, I've never had that particular urge," Kenny said delicately, blushing slightly at the backhanded compliment. Just because he was fake-gay didn't make him a fake-cross-dresser, too!

"You've never worn girls' clothes before?" Brenda asked, looking skeptical. "But I thought gay guys loved dressing up!"

Remembering Principal Buckley's warning that he was to maintain the appearance of his being gay at all times, Kenny gritted his teeth. He came up with the one memory that applied to this situation. "Well, there was this *one* Halloween," he admitted. "My costume got lost so my mom made me wear my sister's leftover from last year and go as a Disney princess."

"Ooh, what princess?" the girls chorused. Kenny's blush deepened.

"Um, the Little Mermaid," he admitted. The girls burst into howls of laughter.

"Oh my god, I bet you were adorable!" Stephanie squealed. "Are there pictures?"

"No way!" Kenny said. "I didn't let her anywhere near the camera."

"I bet you were scared your friends would tease you," Brenda said thoughtfully. "But now that you're out of the closet, you don't have to worry about that kind of thing anymore! After all, our school is really diverse and tolerant this year... At least, that's what all the posters say... And now you have us as your friends!"

"Hooray," Kenny said weakly.

"Sooo..." Stephanie said, grinning as she trailed off.

"Sooo?" Kenny echoed, questioningly.



"So, since nobody's going to tease you, can we dress you up?" Stephanie beamed. All the other girls clapped their hands and squealed in delight. Kenny gulped. Somehow, he'd known this was coming. But he'd already been waxed, manicured, and had his ears pierced. How much worse could it be to throw on some girls' clothes? And maybe he would get to see the actual girls without theirs if he played his cards right.

"That sounds fun," Kenny lied through his teeth. "Let's do it!"

As soon as the words left his lips, the girls were all business, adding to his suspicious feeling that they had been planning this as the main event of their

"girls' night" all along. First they insisted he strip down to his boxers, so they could "see what they had to work with", and when Kenny blushingly countered that they should have to do the same, they only giggled at him. So, after a bit more persuasion, Kenny reluctantly took off his jeans and shirt, showing off his newly-denuded look, which did not go unnoticed.

"Oh, my god, I'm so jealous of your legs," Stephanie gushed. "Do you shave or wax?"

"Wax," Kenny admitted blushingly. "Just today, actually."

"I bet Rex loves that," she said with a saucy wink, running her hand teasingly up Kenny's smooth leg. Her touch made him tremble slightly, and he gulped nervously. Was she hitting on him? Or just having fun with her "gay best friend?" Kenny could only hope.

"You've got him all embarrassed," Brenda said chidingly. "We agreed not to tease him about Rex, remember?"

"Sorry," Stephanie said, though her expression didn't seem particularly apologetic. "Okay, let's find you a pair of panties. Marsha?"

Kenny had never imagined himself getting into a cheerleader's panties, and especially not in this particular sense of the phrase, but before long he was decked out in not just her frilly pink panties, but also a matching bra that she had outgrown years ago. Over the next half hour he was attacked with various makeup products: eyeliner, blush, mascara, lip gloss, the works. They used the reasoning that his eyebrows were already plucked as an excuse to make them even thinner, before using a pencil on them. The "piece de resistance" was a long brunette wig that Marsha's mom apparently used for bad hair days. They spent at least ten minutes combing it out and fiddling with it, but when they finally finished all of the girls were in awe of the final result.

"Oh my God, Kenny, you look better than I do," Brenda said, with a hint of genuine jealousy in her voice. Despite himself, Kenny was curious to see exactly what they'd done to him. He got up from his chair, immediately having to brush the long brunette wig out of his face — it was exceedingly tickly, and was driving him crazy already.

"Holy cow," Kenny muttered, seeing himself in the mirror for the first time. If he'd thought seeing his reflection with bleached hair and plucked eyebrows was weird, this was even weirder. At first he hadn't even recognized himself. He looked like a younger, and, dare he say it, hotter, version of his own sister. Definitely dateable, and maybe even prom queen material. Entranced by the bizarreness of it all, Kenny was only shaken from his reverie by the flash of a camera phone.

"Hey, what's with the shutter bug?" Kenny exclaimed.

"What's the point in looking cute if you aren't going to take pictures?" Stephanie countered, waving her phone. "Come on, Kenny, pose for us!"



Kenny shot another look at his pretty reflection, embarrassed. He fiddled with the strap of his bra, debating internally whether the humiliation of posing in girl's underwear and makeup outweighed the benefits of getting a free pass to a sleepover full of hot cheerleaders.

"How's this?" he asked, putting his hands on his hips and giving the camera an exaggerated pout. He was rewarded with the sounds of more photo-taking and

admiring compliments. Starting to warm to the attention, Kenny struck a variety of "sexy" poses that he had mostly seen in magazines, kicking one foot up cutely behind him, cocking his head to one side, and even teasingly putting a finger in his mouth. The girls were having a great time, joining into the photo-shoot and eagerly taking several "selfies" with their newest girlfriend, and Kenny was enjoying it just a little too much when they kissed him on the cheek or hugged him tight. He was almost glad when they started rummaging through the wardrobe for something he could wear: he needed something to cover up his manhood, which was starting to get hard within the confines of Marsha's silky panties.



"Hey, you're not sending those to anyone, are you?" he asked worriedly, noticing Brenda texting furiously on her cell phone.

"Nobody important," Brenda said with a wink. "Ooh, let's find you a pair of heels!"

Kenny shrugged, resigned to his fate. After all, when in Rome...

~❦~

On the other side of town, Rex's phone buzzed in his pocket in the middle of his workout. He paused, grunting, and took it out, seeing a new text message notification. His face lit up when he saw who it was from: Brenda, that cute girl who'd given him his haircut in the cosmetology classroom. They had sent some flirtatious texts back and forth, but she'd quit recently — Rex suspected it had something to do with the disingenuous rumors floating around about his sexuality.

He figured her desire for him had obviously overpowered her doubt, because there was a photo attached to the text! No doubt she'd had a few drinks with her girlfriends and decided to send him a flirty picture. Eager to see what he was getting — besides, Principal Buckley hadn't forbid him from pretending to be *bi*sexual — Rex quickly opened the attachment. He wasn't disappointed. What he saw was a gorgeous girl with long brunette hair, toying with the strap of her frilly pink bra and giving the camera a flirty smile. She had long, slender legs and a tight little body, even if she didn't have much up top, and those pouty gloss-covered lips of hers were just begging for something to suck on.

Rex frowned. The only weird thing was, it definitely wasn't Brenda. This girl was prettier, not as curvy, and had darker hair and different facial features. Maybe one of her girlfriends was using her phone to text him for a hook-up?



Puzzled, Rex went to the bottom of the message to see a small label attached: "your new girlfriend Kelli!!! ;) ;)" But who could...? Rex took another, harder look at the picture, and his jaw dropped. Those lips... The chick in the picture was totally made-up and wearing a weave and false eyelashes, but now that he knew what to look for, he could tell that it was none other than Kenny!

His first reaction was one of rage — where did Kenny get off, tricking him like that? — and then one of shame, because, like it or not, he'd just gotten turned on by a guy. Kenny was a dweeby shrimp of a male specimen... But as a girl, he was a total hottie. Feeling confused and angry, Rex went to delete the photo, then paused. Maybe he was overreacting, he thought to himself. And for some reason, also, he didn't want to get rid of the photo just yet. Rex stuffed his phone into his pocket and returned to his work-out, already knowing that he would be looking at the photo again later on tonight. It was a hot little picture, after all, and for some reason, the thought of using it as "spank bank" material was more exciting than anything he could have gotten from Brenda.



Kenny had spent the rest of the weekend worrying about what might be in store during Week 2 of the program. They were supposedly undergoing the punishment together, but so far it seemed like everything had been stacked

against Kenny, while Rex had gotten off easy. After all, he hadn't spent his Saturday night stuffed in a dress and heels as a bunch of girls' new personal Barbie doll. They had made him try on at least a dozen different outfits, and "model" them all, before they took off his makeup and nail polish and gave him a ride home.

His worries intensified as Kenny opened up his locker and found a new pink envelope awaiting him. With a groan of dread, he opened it and began to read.

Welcome to Principal Buckley's 3-Week Pro-Awareness Program for Tolerance of Alternative Sexual Lifestyles, Week 2.

Congratulations on successfully completing week one of my program. I hope you learned a great deal about how young alternative lifestyle individuals are often treated, based on their appearance. However, the harshest discrimination against these students often does not occur based on their manner of dress, but on the company they keep. While many bigots are willing to ignore an effeminately-dressed young man, far fewer are willing to ignore a clear romantic relationship.

Kenny's mouth went dry as he realized, with a horrible sinking sensation, exactly where this was going. That "extracurricular" time at the mall had been no accident, and now...

As such, during week two of the program, you will be tasked with simulating such a relationship in order to experience how the world at large responds to a gay couple. Obviously you will not be expected to engage with each other romantically, but at least three hours must be spent in each others' exclusive company each day, and small gestures of affection, such as hugs when greeting or saying goodbye, and hand-holding while walking together, are MANDATORY. You will be under observation at all times. Failure to comply will result in very serious consequences, as previously discussed, and any assumptions of your sexuality based on your behavior must not be denied under any circumstances.

Kenny stared down at the letter as if it were a poisonous snake. Small gestures of affection? Hand-holding? Principal Buckley couldn't be serious. "This is going way too far," Kenny muttered, closing his locker with a loud bang.

"You're telling me," came a voice. Kenny jumped, realizing Rex was leaning against the next locker over with a similar envelope clutched in his fist. His voice was somewhat calm, but there was a wild look in his eye that Kenny knew meant he was on the edge of losing his cool.

"You, uh, you got the same letter?" Kenny asked hesitantly.

"Probably, except mine says I have to walk you to and from all your classes," Rex said through gritted teeth. "And it included a Xerox of the letter he's going to send the judge, so shut up and let's get this over with." Rex left out that it

also included a form to sign up for football and a post-it note that had, "You could make this all go away, son!" written on it.

"Is it really that bad?" Kenny asked.

"It makes me sound like a freaking criminal psychopath," Rex said darkly. "Every little thing I've done since I've got here, plus some stuff he dug up from my old school, put together in the worst way possible. He's devious, I'll give the old bastard that much."

"Sorry," Kenny said automatically. "Okay, my first class is science, so..." Both boys stood there awkwardly, staring at the walls, floors, and ceilings, before Rex finally extended his hand and Kenny awkwardly put his own inside of it, feeling like a total pansy. While they were still standing there, holding hands and each of them holding a pink envelope in the other, Stephanie waltzed past.

"Oh my god, you guys write each other little love notes?" she gushed. "That is so adorable!" Kenny blushed to the roots, while Rex went the other direction, going as pale as someone on their deathbed. The suggestion he wrote love notes to anybody, much less another boy, was like having his guts ripped out. He stiffly jerked his head towards the science wing, and they began to walk. Kenny's palm was sweating so badly he was surprised he didn't slip out of Rex's grip, which was none too tight to begin with. He didn't know what to do with his free arm, and their joined-together hands kept bumping awkwardly against either his or Rex's hip as they walked.



Of course, Kenny was focusing on a way to avoid the harsh reality that he was walking down the hallway, hand-in-hand with another boy. That reality was impossible to avoid, as everyone in the entire school seemed to

be staring. He kept his head down and his gaze to the floor, still blushing bright red. Rex, on the other hand, was glaring stonily and defiantly at every single person who dared look twice at them. Together, it gave the impression that Kenny had shyly and demurely agreed to take his boyfriend's hand, but was frightened of receiving the wrong kind of attention, while Rex was proud of his new relationship and ready to beat down anyone who dared object to it.

Plenty of girls gave Kenny encouraging smiles, but plenty of guys gave him strange looks of surprise or disgust, and it seemed like the longest walk in Kenny's life to finally get to science class. When they arrived, Rex made as if to break away immediately, only for both of them to hear the distinctive sound of Principal Buckley clearing his throat. And afraid of getting on his bad side on day one of what promised to be a very long week, Kenny gave the principal a quick glance, then, blushing furiously, hugged Rex awkwardly around the middle. Rex returned it with one arm, and a very pained expression on his face, then beat it down the hallway like a bat out of hell.

"Looks like someone's official," Brenda sang as they walked into the classroom. "Well, if I can't have him, at least no other girls can. Good for you, Kenny."

"Thanks," Kenny muttered miserably, as he sat down in his usual spot.

"You two are so cute together," she added. "In a dorky, awkward way, of course. I bet you're a lot more intimate in private, but don't be shy in public, either. It's the 21st century, and nobody at this school is going to complain!"

Meanwhile, as Rex slouched into his usual spot in his English class, the quarterback of the football team leaned forward and tapped him on the shoulder. Ready for a fight, Rex spun in his seat.

"Yeah?" he demanded. "What?"

"I was just going to say, you can stop glaring at everybody, dude," the quarterback said. "I'm cool with it, and the rest of us are, too. It takes all kinds, right? The way I see it, it's two less dudes I have to compete with for chicks. Not that Kenny was ever much of a threat, of course." Every masculine instinct within Rex wanted to scream that he was not some kind of queer, he was not dating Kenny, and he had banged more chicks than the whole football team, never mind just the quarterback. But remembering Principal Buckley's threat, he had no choice but to grunt and nod his head.

For both boys, it was one of the longest days of their young lives, but both of them dutifully carried out their instructions. Rex showed up to walk with him after each class, like any protective boyfriend, and Kenny, after a tip from Stephanie, found it was easier to loop his arms around Rex's neck for their quick hello-and-goodbye hugs, although she was still pestering him to kiss him. He managed to claim he was still too shy to do so in public, which satisfied her for now.

Rex tolerated the embraces with gritted teeth and stoic resolve, but it was driving him absolutely crazy — and not for the reason Kenny thought. Try as he might, he couldn't get the alluring picture of "Kelli" out of his head, and whenever Kenny went up on tip-toe to press his soft little body against him, it certainly didn't *feel* like hugging a guy. On the contrary, with Kenny's smooth, hairless arms around his neck and the feminine, flowery smell of his shampoo in Rex's nostrils, almost every indicator in Rex's masculine brain told him he was touching a girl. From the corner of his eye, whenever he caught sight of Kenny's smooth-shaven legs or dainty waist, he couldn't help but think of "Kelli" all over again, and to his shame, he was starting to get aroused by it. He did his best to think of sports whenever Kenny held his hand and brushed against his thigh by accident, but it was getting increasingly hard... In more ways than one!

As soon as the bell rang and Rex said goodbye to his little "boyfriend" at his locker, he bolted out of the school, eager to be away from Principal Buckley's prying eyes and needing to deal with a problem in his pants, besides. He was absolutely furious at being made to act like a queer and go around holding hands with another boy, but even more confused and angry about the fact he couldn't stop thinking of Kenny as a cute girl, rather than a guy. Before he could stop himself, he took out his phone and opened up the picture again, staring lustfully at the girl's sexy pink pout and soft, slender legs. She was so damn hot... And she was Kenny, the dweeb who'd gotten him into this mess in the first place by not acting as a proper look-out. The little shrimp deserved to have to flounce around like a pansy after giving them up so easily in the principal's office, but Rex certainly didn't deserve this kind of humiliation, or confusion. Closing his phone, he headed home, determined not to think about Kenny, or "Kelli" for the rest of the day.



Despite his proclamation, Rex was to find it all but impossible to put Kenny out of his mind. Not only did they have to maintain the charade of being in a relationship at school, but Principal Buckley had also decreed that they spend a certain amount of time together after school, as well. Obviously, away from Buckley's prying eyes there was no need for hugs, hand-holding, or acting affectionate, but the two hapless boys were still stuck in each other's company for several hours per day.

Rex made sure to be as angry and surly with Kenny as usual, but he felt like he was slowly losing his grip on sanity... Every time he so much as looked at Kenny, he started fantasizing about his alter-ego, "Kelli." Rex's reason for going along with Buckley's insane punishment in the first place was that he was secure in his sexuality. This punishment was just supposed to be something he could do without sweating a drop. He didn't care if a bunch of small-town

losers thought he was going through some weird gay phase — he was close to graduating, and once he did, he was getting the hell out of town, back to the big city, where he could go right back to cruising for chicks with no-one the wiser. But all of a sudden, his rock-solid straightness was in question, and it was starting to scare him.

As for Kenny, he was no more enjoying their predicament than Rex was — as he often reflected, he had the far worse end of the deal. Nobody wanted to tangle with a muscled-up angry teen like Rex, but plenty of people had smart remarks or threatening looks for the kid they saw as a swishy, effeminate gay teen. Being forced to dress in a stereotypically homosexual manner had opened his eyes to all kinds of discrimination, and even if his high school was a 'haven of tolerance,' the street certainly wasn't. Since the weather had turned warmer, he was now expected to wear shorts, and most of them were horribly short and tight, showing off his clearly waxed legs.

He had attracted more than a few wolf-whistles from guys driving by who hadn't realized, from behind, that they were looking at a guy and not a short-haired girl. Naturally, when they found out, they were either stunned — or angry! Kenny had had enough homophobic slurs hissed at him to fill a book, and the only way he could feel safe was, ironically, by sticking to Rex's side. Whenever he wasn't in school or at his own house, he found he felt most secure with Rex and his intimidating muscle-bound presence around.



Since they had to spend a certain

number of hours together each day, they had taken to doing their homework together at Rex's house, since his mom had been working late. Well, in reality, Kenny did both of their homework, while Rex played with his phone. Rex mostly ignored him, which Kenny supposed was better than bullying him. Although once, when Kenny went to the cupboard to get something, he caught Rex staring at his taut butt as he bent down to retrieve snacks from the lowest shelf. Kenny had blushed brightly, but Rex had just denied it. Neither of them had spoken about it, however, Kenny began to be on the lookout for it, and realized Rex was staring at him a lot more often than was normal. Was Rex actually *attracted* to him? Was his rough-and-tumble exterior just hiding the fact that he was actually gay all along? It seemed hard to believe, but there was no doubt this "program" of Principal Buckley's was messing with both their heads.

By the time Friday arrived, it was more or less accepted that Kenny and Rex were the high school's first gay couple. There was no staring in the hallways, and all of the staff acted as though there were nothing out of the ordinary. Stephanie, Brenda, and the other cheerleaders were constantly pumping Kenny for information about him and Rex's "intimate" activities, but all of Kenny's protests and blushing only made them suspect the worst, often dissolving into giggles making jokes about his butt and how much Rex had probably enjoyed it the night before. It was about the most emasculated Kenny had ever felt, having everyone assume he was the submissive, "bottom" partner to the big muscular Rex, but he had to admit it seemed like the most logical conclusion.

He was both relieved and anxious when the final bell rang on Friday. He had survived Week Two of Buckley's Pro-Awareness for Tolerance of Alternative Sexual Lifestyles, but he had no idea what Week Three might bring. His family, and everyone he knew, were now convinced he was gay — though he'd managed to hide Rex from his family so far, so they didn't know about that *particular* situation. How deep of a hole would Principal Buckley make him dig? Would he really be able to convince everyone that it had just been a phase? If he told the truth, that it was punishment for breaking the law, would they believe him? He was contemplating all of these questions at his locker when Rex arrived.

"Hey," Rex grunted, giving him the briefest hug possible. "You ready?"

"Yes," Kenny said, quickly gathering his books and closing his locker. "Your place?" He blushed, as someone's head turned at the accidental double-entendre. "Uh, for homework," he quickly clarified.

"Yeah, hurry up," Rex said, grabbing Kenny's free hand. Kenny grimaced, but quickly followed after him. As soon as they were outside the school, they dropped each other's hands like poisonous snakes and started to walk. As usual, Rex was silent and taciturn. Kenny, who was still holding out hope that Rex

might come around and want to be his friend once the whole thing blew over — misery loved company, after all — tried his best to make conversation.

"So, what do you think Week Three is going to be?" he said nervously.

"Hell if I know," Rex said. "Tutus and ballet slippers, probably."

Kenny grimaced. He had a feeling that, if Principal Buckley did have something like that in mind, he would be the one in the tutu, not Rex. They walked quickly towards Rex's house, which was on the seedier side of town, silent the whole way. Once he let them in with the key, they sat down at their usual places around the kitchen table.

"You didn't take any notes in English class again?" Kenny chided, as Rex's binder was opened to reveal nothing but blank paper.

"Why bother?" Rex asked, rolling his eyes. "You take notes, so why should I?"

"Well, what if I just stopped letting you copy all mine?" Kenny demanded snappishly, covering his notes with one hand.

"It's not my fault you're so much smarter than me, honey," Rex said, slipping into the typical "boyfriend-girlfriend" banter without even realizing it. Fortunately, Kenny took it as more teasing.

"Don't call me that!" Kenny protested. "Jeez, it's bad enough at school!"

"Sorry, *dear,"* Rex said, quickly exaggerating his mocking tone to make sure Kenny thought he was ribbing him intentionally. "You're just so sweet, that's all!"

"Knock it off, I said," Kenny growled, throwing a shove in Rex's direction. Rex caught the weak punch easily, holding Kenny's narrow wrist. Even as he did so, he couldn't help but marvel at how soft and supple Kenny's hairless arm felt — there was hardly a trace of boyish muscle. He'd always known Kenny was scrawny, but now that he had seen him as "Kelli," he seemed more slender, shapely, feminine... Rex found himself gripping Kenny's hand, imagining him all dolled up in makeup and long hair, as his female alter-ego, until...

"Dude, what the hell?" Kenny gaped, staring horrifiedly at Rex's lap. He pulled his hand out of Rex's grip, and Rex looked down, equally horrified to realize he was sporting a very obvious hard-on. "Are you actually turning gay or something?" Kenny demanded.

"You're the one staring at my crotch!" Rex shot back. "I was just thinking about a chick I used to screw back home, that's all."

"Yeah, right!" Kenny blustered. "I saw you staring at my ass the other day!"

"In your dreams!" Rex snapped angrily. "You're the one swishing around in short-shorts showing it off, and you have the nerve to call me gay after staring at my crotch? The only fairy here is you! Get out of my house, you little queer!"

"Screw you!" Kenny rejoined, bundling up his things. "Have fun failing the test on Tuesday, by the way!" He grabbed his binder and books before heading out the door at top speed. Rex, furious as he was, couldn't help but think how much more appealing Kenny's butt would look wiggling back and forth in a girl's high-heeled, hip-rolling gait. The door slammed, and Rex shook his head. He was really losing it, fantasizing about a girl who didn't exist... Or rather, who *did* exist, but only in the form of Kenny. He couldn't deny it any longer. But how could he fix the issue, especially with Buckley forcing them to spend all of this time together?



Kenny didn't see Rex for the rest of the weekend, Principal Buckley's time-sheets be damned. He didn't want to spend another second around that asshole. The nerve of him calling him a queer, when Rex was the one who'd been checking out another guy! Although... As he ran the footage of the happening over and over in his mind, Kenny was finding himself less and less sure that Rex had actually been sporting an erection, and if he had, was it really that much of a stretch to believe that he'd just been thinking about some girl while daydreaming rather than paying attention to the homework? Was it just a coincidence? Either way, Kenny had officially given up on getting Rex to be his friend. He was an insensitive ass, through and through, and nothing was going to change that.

For the first time in his life, Kenny actually had real friends to compare to! The cheerleaders were all still thrilled that they finally had a "gay bestie" and Kenny was willing to call things "fabulous" and flick his wrist every once in a while since it meant he got to watch some of the hottest girls in his school getting changed — one time Marsha even asked him for his opinion on her new undies! His family seemed to have adjusted remarkably quickly to thinking of him as their "gay son" as well, and his dad almost seemed relieved to have an excuse for why Kenny was so awful with both sports and getting girls. His mother and sister were spending more time with him, and his relationship with both of them seemed to be improving.

So, there was a small upside to getting caught with the spray-paint and having to go through Buckley's "sensitivity training" style punishment, but that didn't make Rex any more tolerable. He was happy enough to spend the weekend hanging out with the cheerleaders, who understood that he had had some kind of "lover's spat" with his "boyfriend" and offered their sympathies. Kenny was beginning to think about what would happen when his three weeks were up. He would definitely miss hanging out with popular girls, and how angry would they be if it turned out a straight guy, and a dweeby one at that, had been privy to their sleepovers and such? He might earn the respect of the guys by playing it off as one long prank, but wouldn't people still suspect he was gay all along?



It was all starting to worry him. Was he going to have to pretend to be gay for the rest of his high-school career? Sure, hanging out with cheerleaders was neat, but having random people on the street bully him wasn't, and how on Earth was he supposed to get a girlfriend if everyone thought he swung the other way? All of his preoccupations made him even more anxious as he arrived at school the next Monday, wearing his typically femmy outfit, expecting another pink envelope in his locker. However, he was surprised to find nothing out of the ordinary in his locker at all. Maybe Principal Buckley had decided that two weeks was enough punishment? Kenny stared suspiciously into his empty locker, so intent that he nearly jumped out of his skin when the school's intercom system blared his name.

"Kenny Hart, come to the principal's office immediately!"

Kenny gulped. Why had he been summoned, but not Rex? He shot a glance down the hallway where Rex usually entered from to walk him to class, but saw no sign of him. Frowning, Kenny closed his locker and hurried to Principal Buckley's office. He hesitated in front of the door, wondering what new disaster awaited him, but the principal seemed to somehow sense he was outside.

"Come in!" came his gruff voice. Kenny opened the door and walked inside to find his high school principal leaned back in his chair, arms folded, with a

disappointed expression on his face. "Sit down, Kenny," Principal Buckley sighed. "You know, I really thought you were making progress for a second there." Confused, Kenny obliged him and took a seat facing the desk. "I thought you were truly learning the tenets of tolerance and diversity that make our school such a wonderful place," Buckley continued. "But I guess not. I'm very disappointed, Kenny."

"What did I do?" Kenny asked, wide-eyed.

"You tell me," Buckley said, eyebrow cocked in disapproval, then rotated the monitor of his computer so that it faced Kenny. Kenny gaped at what he saw: a photo of himself wearing Marsha's frilly pink bra and panties, completely done up with makeup and a wig, pouting seductively for the camera... But worse, underneath the humiliating photo, there was a caption: "I'm a hot little tranny looking for a big stud to satisfy me tonight! Xoxoxoxo"

Kenny's eyes widened as he saw how many views and comments the picture had attracted, then widened even more so when he saw that it had been posted from his very own social media page! Only the cheerleaders had pictures of his little "drag night," but how had they hacked his page, and why on Earth would they?

"I can't believe that after two whole weeks of seeing what life is like for an alternative sexuality, you would turn around and start preying on an even-more-marginalized group," Buckley said, shaking his head in disappointment. "You do know that "tranny" is a very offensive term when used by outsiders, don't you? This whole thing is extremely... *Transphobic."*

"But I didn't have anything to do with this!" Kenny exclaimed.

"Is that so?" Buckley asked skeptically. "So that's not you in the picture?"

"Well... Yes, it is," Kenny faltered. "But it was just a joke with some of the girls!"

"You think transgender issues are a joke?" Buckley demanded. "You think it's funny to dress up as a girl and then make fun of transsexuals by suggesting they are all sexually promiscuous floozies looking for men to satisfy their needs?"

"No!" Kenny gaped. "No, I don't think their, uh, issues are a joke at all! I'm not like that!"

"Then you meant it seriously?" Buckley frowned, forming a thoughtful steeple with his fingers. "I had hoped that this program might make you take a deeper look at your own identity and sexuality, but if you mean to say that you are coming to grips with your own transsexuality..."

"My own... Huh?" Kenny muttered weakly, trailing off. "Wait, I'm no tranny! Uh, transsexual."

"So you were making a mean-spirited joke at their expense, then," Buckley said.

"No!" Kenny protested. "No joke! I mean, I didn't say that! Somebody hacked my page!"

"Why on Earth would somebody do that?" Buckley sighed, rubbing his forehead. "Look, you've already admitted that this is a picture of you, and it was posted from your page, so you need to start taking responsibility for your actions, Kenny. Was this a very ill-advised joke, or are you trying to communicate your deep-seated gender confusion? It's either one or the other, so choose."

Kenny stared from the computer monitor to the principal and back again. "Uh, neither?" he squeaked. "Look, that's me in the picture, but I didn't write the caption, okay?"

"So somebody 'hacked' onto your page, posted a photo of you, and gave it a transphobic caption?" Buckley said skeptically. "I find that hard to believe. Even if that were true, the question still stands. Why did you dress up as a girl for this photo in the first place, never mind strike such a, er, sexual pose? Were you making fun of transsexuals, or exploring your own sexuality?"

Kenny, overwhelmed, could only mutely shake his head. The truth was that he'd been hoping to get a look at the girls in their own underwear by agreeing to pose in lingerie, but he had a feeling Principal Buckley wouldn't like that answer much either. If he said it was a joke, he was in big trouble for being "insensitive". If he said it wasn't a joke, well, the principal was going to think he was some kind of transgender who had jumped at the opportunity to dress up as a girl. He bounced between the two answers, trying to decide which was the least harmful, but Principal Buckley spared him from answering at all.

"Well, whichever it was, I have a solution in mind, irregardless," Buckley said, turning the monitor back to face himself. "Originally I had planned for Week 3 to be one of reflection on your experience, but now I have something else in mind for you. I think it would be beneficial for you to experience a small taste of the life of a transgendered individual, rather than just dressing up as a cruel joke or a fleeting exploration. This final week of Principal Buckley's 3 Week Pro-awareness Program for Tolerance of Alternative Sexual Lifestyles, you will be unofficially re-enrolled as a transgendered student named Kelli."

"What?" Kenny gasped. "You mean you want me to... to wear a dress, or something?"

"If you so desire," Buckley said casually. "I expect you to role-play the part of a transgendered teen in order to better understand their perspective. After you made such strides with my Pro-awareness Program for Tolerance of Alternative Sexual Lifestyles, this seems like a logical step."

Nothing about any of this seemed logical to Kenny anymore. "So I'm supposed to just tell my family that I want to be a girl now?" he demanded. "They just got over me saying I'm gay! I mean, pretending to be gay!"

"Coming out as transgendered is often very difficult," Buckley admitted. "That's why I've taken the liberty of speaking with your parents and letting them know that you have generously agreed to take part in a week-long role-play exercise in honor of Tolerance Week. They've been instructed to treat you as if you were their transgendered son. Or daughter, I suppose."

"You talked to my family?" Kenny demanded, horrified. Suddenly, the comforting looks his mom had kept giving him the prior evening made sense, as did his sister's giggles and assurances that he would "look so cute." How had everyone known about this but him? "This is too much," Kenny said at last. "This is too strange, too crazy. I can't go through with it. I'll own up to the graffiti."

"Really?" Buckley said. "Well, I'm surprised by your self confidence, Kenny."

"What do you mean?" Kenny asked.

"Well, if was in your place, I don't think I'd be so sure I could just return to my normal life with no repercussions, passing off your experimentation as a phase, nothing more, and risk ruining the budding friendships you've made, shatter your parents' trust in you, and even drag Rex Manning into being tried right alongside you in court," Buckley said authoritatively. "If you come clean, I'm afraid the whole story has to come out. That incriminates Rex, as well." The principal got reflective. "Well, I don't know much about Rex, but I'd hate to cross him, that's for sure. That would be a risky proposition with his temper."

Kenny was totally overwhelmed by the principal's argument. He was right — if he came clean now, his new relationships with his family would be toast, and the cheerleaders would all hate him for being a sneaky perv. And Rex was capable of anything, from beating him like a mule to beating him to a pulp. And if Kenny himself got jail-time... He shuddered to think what might happen, especially with his pierced ears and femmy appearance.

"Okay," he blurted. "I'll do it."

"I knew you'd see reason," Principal Buckley said with a grave smile. "Well, run along. The girls are waiting for you in cosmetology."

"You mean it starts today?" Kenny asked weakly.

"Well, they always say there's no time like the present," Buckley shrugged. "Remember, I want you taking this role-play seriously. You're a transgendered student named Kelli, and everyone is going to treat you as such. Understood?"

Kenny nodded his head, but the reality was, he felt like he understood less and less of what was going on each time Buckley opened his mouth. In a state of shell-shock, he slowly exited the office and marched off towards the cosmetology classroom. He had a feeling he'd be leaving with a lot more than a haircut and pierced ears this time around...

By the time the hapless Kenny arrived at the cosmetology classroom, the girls were ready and waiting to complete their special "extra-credit" assignment. Marsha, in particular, was excited to see him, pulling him into a hug the moment he stepped through the door.

"I guess somebody liked getting dressed up more than they let on!" she giggled.

"What do you mean?" Kenny asked dazedly.

"Come on, first you start posting pics of yourself online, and now you come out as transgendered just in time to be a girl for Spirit Week?" she demands. "Or, I mean, Tolerance Week. Whatever it's called now. I'm just saying, that little makeover must have really awakened something. This is going to be so fun!"

"Wait, so what exactly did Principal Buckley tell you?" Kenny questioned her.

"That you think you might be transgendered, but you're scared to tell your family, so you're going to be dressing as a girl supposedly just for this week, but in reality you want to become a girl forever," Brenda said quickly. "Everyone's supposed to treat you like a normal girl and help you adjust to your new gender! How long have you known you were born in the wrong body?"

"Uhhhh..." Kenny stalled painfully, knowing he couldn't very well say "about five minutes!" "I'm not sure?" he offered.

"Well, I personally think you're making the right choice," Brenda beamed. "You're kind of a shrimp as a guy, but you make one hot girl! Especially once we're done with you. Right, girls?"

The other cosmetology students all chimed in their agreement. Before Kenny could fully process the backhanded compliment, one of the other girls was holding what looked like a long chunk of human hair against his head to make sure the color was a match. "We figured you would want to use falls until your actual hair grows out," she explained. "And so we found some super high-quality weaves... Like, uber-expensive, but the school is paying for everything, so we're going all out."

"Can you believe that?" Brenda giggled. "A full makeover on the school's budget! Principal Buckley must really like you."

"I don't think it's that," Kenny said weakly.

"So anyways, that means we get to use all the most expensive products on you!" Brenda continued. "Isn't that exciting?"

Kenny gulped. "Thrilled," he murmured. The girls ushered him into his chair and wasted no time leaning him back to wash his hair in the basin, getting rid of the gel he'd been told to use on his "pompadour" style hair. As the warm water rinsed his head, he tried to keep track of the huge web of lies Principal

Buckley was spreading. The school thought he was actually transgender... His family thought he was dressing up as a girl for some kind of Tolerance Week stunt... And nobody except the principal knew he was actually being punished for his involvement with Rex's graffiti escapades at the start of the month. Sooner or later, wouldn't this whole house of cards have to come crashing down dramatically?

"Hey!" Kenny protested, brought back to reality by the fact that one of the girls was attaching false nails to his fingers. "Just because I'm dressing as a girl doesn't mean I need, like, claws!"

"Sorry, honey, but you're officially our guinea pig for the week," the girl smiled. "I've been looking for an opportunity to try out these new gel nails on someone. Don't worry, you'll get used to them fast."

"I hope so," Kenny groaned, leaning back in the chair again as each false nail was buffed, shaped, and painted a bright pink. His toenails were being painted the same shade! Once his own hair was blow-dryed and combed out, the girls set to work attaching the falls. The little combs that held them to his real hair were uncomfortable against his scalp, but the girls all assured him the end result would be worth it, and much more natural than the wig he'd worn a week ago. As soon as they were satisfied with the long brown tresses hanging sleek and shiny around his face, they pulled it all back in order to set to work on his makeup.

Kenny wasn't overly bothered by the process, as he'd already experienced it once, but he started paying close attention when Brenda warned they wouldn't always be around to do it for him. "I'm sure you've played around with makeup before," she added diplomatically. "But this is a quick, easy look that doesn't take too long, so I figured you might want to steal it."

Petrified by the idea of having to do his own makeup and walk around school looking like a clown, Kenny redoubled his efforts to pay attention as they showed him how to use lip-liner to make his already-generous lips look even more striking, before filling them in with a pretty pink gloss. They used a chocolate brown eye-liner on his upper lids, and then a combination of brown and pink shadow to make his eyes really "pop." A bit of attention with the eyelash curler and a coat of Maybelline mascara completed the look.

"See, nice and simple," Brenda said proudly. "Contouring and stuff is a lot more work, but you have nice bone structure and great skin, so unless you're going out somewhere, this is probably all you need."

"Good to know," Kenny said, turning his head this way and that way in the mirror. He was trying to remember the exact steps they had taken to give him such deep, limpid, dare he say it, stunning eyes, but he kept getting distracted by the fact that his reflection in the mirror was that of a really hot girl, albeit a very flat-chested one wearing a V-neck shirt that did nothing to disguise her

lack of breasts. Even so, Kenny guessed that most guys would have a tough time pegging him as anything but a cute girl, just a slightly underdeveloped one. Lots of models had that super-skinny, androgynous look, though.

Kenny flipped his hair from one side to the other, pouting his lips in the mirror without even realizing he was primping and posing like a girl. The hottie in the mirror matched his actions, giving him a little thrill. Maybe this wasn't going to be so bad after all. The makeover with the girls had been kind of fun, once he gave in and started enjoying himself, and despite himself he was a little curious to see what kind of reactions he would get from the student body at large.

"Okay, missy, stop admiring yourself," Brenda said, rustling two large plastic bags. "Everyone donated a few things that should fit, so there's enough to put together some really cute outfits. How do your legs feel?"

"Uh, fine?" Kenny said, confused. Brenda rolled her eyes and grabbed Kenny's bare calf, making him squirm from being ticklish.

"Still smooth," she said. "So... Skirt?"

Kenny gulped. When in Rome... "You're the boss," he said. "Whatever you think will look good on me? I guess?"

"Thanks for the vote of confidence," Brenda grinned. "Okay, underthings first..."

Over the next half-hour, Kenny got up-close and personal with his new wardrobe for the week, starting with underwear. Rather than lend out her own intimates again, Brenda had bought a few bras and pairs of panties for him, using the school's tab once again. ("Probably the first time a charge from Victoria's Secret has shown up on the school's spending," she chuckled as she handed him the bag.) The girls thought it was pretty fun to make Kenny learn how to put the bra on himself, but he got the hang of the hooks relatively quickly. The new twist came in the form of what looked like two small chicken cutlets: what the girls laughing referred to as "instant bust."

"It's a trade secret, so don't go telling all the guys about it," Brenda teased. "Nothing wrong with taking a little help!"

She slipped the gel inserts into the cups of his bra and helped him adjust it again. The added weight, and jiggle, was a bizarre experience, and quite different from the pantyhose stuffing they'd used on him last time. When he looked in the mirror, it was easy to imagine that he had actual, if small, breasts. It was a good thing that Brenda had instructed him on how to "tuck" his manhood up out of sight and secure it with a bit of tape, claiming she'd seen it on the internet. If he hadn't, his reflection might have made a bit of a conspicuous lump in his panties.

Once his underwear was in order, it was time to pick out his outfit. Kenny nearly disavowed his previous statement when he was shown the short white

denim skirt they had in mind — it was very, well, short — but after a bit of badgering he stepped in and pulled it up his hips. Having nothing between his smooth thighs was a weird experience again, but he had to admit that he had some really, really nice legs. For his top, he was given a silky white camisole, and then a dark gray tank-top to wear overtop of that, exposing a bit of the frilly edge for a very chic look. A few bangles on his wrists, hoops in his ears rather than his usual diamond studs, and Kenny was stepping into a pair of ballerina style flats as a brand new person... Kelli!

"What did I tell you, girls?" Brenda said, shaking her head in mock anger. "She looks way hotter than any guy has a right to... No offense, Kelli. I know you're, like, a real girl and everything. Just trapped in a boy's body, right?"

"Something like that," Kenny said, not quite sure himself. One thing was certain, though — "Kelli" looked like the kind of high-school heartbreaker Kenny had always admired from a distance. He couldn't even imagine what Rex would look like in this get-up... In fact, he shuddered at just the thought. It did remind him, however, that Rex was going to see him all dolled up like a chick in a matter of minutes, when he went to English class. What was he going to say? Hell, what was everyone else going to say? Kenny stared at his reflection in the mirror, toying nervously with one earring. Having everyone think he was gay was one thing, having everyone think he was a cross-dressing transsexual was another thing... Wasn't it?

"Ladies, I think our work here is done," Brenda said, checking the time on her cell phone. "Here, you can borrow this old purse of mine to keep your makeup and stuff in." She handed him a leather purse, which he settled awkwardly on his shoulder before picking up his books. Suddenly, he found that his heart was pounding with nervousness. Dressing up at a sleepover as a joke had been one thing, but now he was going to be swishing around school in a skirt for the next week! Sensing his confidence failing him, Brenda and one of the other girls quickly linked arms with him.

"You have English, right?" she asked. "We're walking that way. I bet nobody even recognizes you until roll-call!"

Before Kenny could think up any excuses to stay behind in the cosmetology room for the rest of the day, he was dragged outside with a mass of other girls. The lights of the hallway suddenly seemed much brighter, and the floor much louder, as he took his first few steps into his week as "Kelli". True to Brenda's prediction, none of the other students hurrying off to their next class looked twice — except for a few guys curious about what they obviously viewed as a hot new girl!

"Boy, I wonder what Rex is going to think," Brenda laughed. "Do you think he's into it? Or does he like his guys to look like guys?" Kenny blushed furiously.

"Uh, guess I'll find out soon enough," he said. "Thanks for all the help, Brenda."

"No problem," she said. "You can grab those other clothes after school today, and then me and Stephanie thought we could all go shopping sometime tomorrow? To get you some of your own stuff. I mean, I know your parents think this is just temporary, but you're going to need a real wardrobe at some point anyways, right?"

"Uh, right," Kenny said, trying to keep track of who thought what in regards to his sexuality. School thought he was transgendered, family thought he was gay but cross-dressing for Tolerance Week, and Principal Buckley thought he was either confused or a transphobe in need of exposure therapy... "Simple," Kenny muttered sarcastically, once Brenda and the other girls were out of earshot. Taking a deep breath, he clutched his books to his chest like a life preserver and stepped into his first class as Kelli. He was slightly late, and the teacher was already speaking, but stopped dead in puzzlement as Kenny walked inside. To his dismay, most of the class stared, too. Kenny kept his eyes down, embarrassed, as he slowly made his way to his usual seat in front of Rex.

He could feel Rex's gaze pretty much boring through him, but he couldn't bring himself to meet his gaze. Flushing, Kenny tugged at his skirt with both hands and awkwardly sat down, trying to ensure he didn't flip his skirt and expose his panties. He carefully got out his binder and opened it, and it seemed like only then did things "click" for the teacher, who cleared his throat.

"Kelli... Please do try to be on time tomorrow for the quiz," he said loudly, as if to ensure that everyone else made the connection, too. Kenny swallowed, wishing he could sink deeper into his seat as all eyes were drawn to him. Even on his first day with his new haircut, pierced ears, and new "style," it hadn't been like this. It hadn't even been a fraction this bad. He felt like there was a spotlight shining down on him from the ceiling.

"Sorry," Kenny said in a small voice, still staring down at his long, pink, claw-like nails resting on the desk. He finally gathered his courage and raised his head. The curious looks quickly disappeared, although many of the girls gave him their usual friendly smiles. The strangest was that some of the guys, were, too, although they quickly caught themselves and looked away. Kenny blushed even redder as he realized he was being checked out, just like a real girl would. Obviously he wasn't the only one who found "Kelli" very attractive. Though Kenny staunchly tried to focus on the lesson, it wasn't long before Rex tapped him on the shoulder. He considered ignoring him, but, knowing he would need to get it out of the way eventually, he spun in his seat while the teacher was distracted by someone's question.

"Let me guess," Rex said, before Kenny could even open his mouth. "Buckley?" Kenny let out a sigh of frustration.

"Yeah," he said, in a low whisper. "It's crazy! Somebody posted pictures of me dressed as a girl online, and now Principal Buckley thinks I'm not just a homophobe, but a transphobe, too. Or else that I'm actually transgender. I don't know which option is worse, but his solution seems to be the same. I'm stuck like this all week!" His anger at Rex over their confrontation had been momentarily forgotten in the madness of the day.

"Kelli, you have plenty of time to talk to your boyfriend outside of class!" the English teacher intoned sternly. Rex shot the teacher an angry look, then returned to lounging in his seat, laid back and looking relaxed. Kenny attempted to do the same, but English class as a girl was quite a bit more distracting. He was constantly having to brush his newly-long brunette tresses out of his face every time he leaned down to look at his notes, and flipping through the pages was made a heck of a lot more difficult thanks to his long pink nails. The worst part was probably the way his skirt kept riding up whenever he shifted in his seat, and the way two or three guys always seemed to see it happen!

The whole thing was profoundly bizarre, and when the bell finally rang Kenny couldn't believe he had not just the rest of the day, but a whole week left of this. How was he ever going to get used to it? He couldn't even stand still in his new clothes, and all of his wriggling around had managed to make the back of his bikini-cut panties wedge themselves between his butt-cheeks in an extremely uncomfortable way, so he waited for the rest of the class, who were still shooting long looks at him, to leave before he stood up. To his annoyance, Rex watched with no hint of shame as Kenny quickly adjusted himself. He offered an arm to help Kenny balance, and the feminized boy grudgingly took it.

"This skirt is a pain in the ass," Kenny lamented in a dark mutter.

"I... Uh... I'm sure you'll get used to it," Rex said. From the way his eyes were roving up and down Kenny's slender legs, he certainly didn't mind the view it afforded him! Suddenly, as if he realized what he was doing, he blinked and swallowed slightly. "Uh, hey, sorry about what happened the other day. I shouldn't have called you a queer. I know we're both just doing what we have to do to get Buckley off our case."

Kenny was struck speechless. Rex Manning, resident bad-ass of the high-school, had actually said the word "sorry" without spontaneously combusting. That was a first. "Uh, no problem," Kenny said slowly. "It happens... I mean, we both have tempers, and we're both pretty macho, so it's obviously hard on both of us..."

"Yeah," Rex said, with a wry smile. "Sure. Now come on," he said, taking Kenny's dainty, manicured hand in his own much larger one. "You can tell me everything on the way to your next class. I'm still acting as your 'boyfriend,' according to the latest pink envelope. He told me you were getting a slightly

different punishment for week three, but I wasn't expecting cross-dressing." They set off into the hallway, and Kenny realized he now had to take two quick steps for every single step of Rex's, thanks to the constriction of his tight miniskirt. It also happened to lend a very sexy, feminine sway to his butt, but he didn't notice that — though the guys behind them certainly did! He was too busy noticing something else strange: normally Rex's hand was very stiff and awkward during their forced displays of affection, but now he had interlocked their fingers together and was holding him gently but firmly — was he automatically starting to treat him like a girl without realizing it, now that he looked like this? Kenny brushed his hair out of his eyes again, making one of his earrings brush against his cheek, and looked down at the floor through his long, curled, mascara-laden eyelashes, embarrassed. All of these new feminine sensations made it difficult to concentrate, but he managed to relay everything that had happened to him that morning, starting in the principal's office.

"One of the girls must have posted that picture," Kenny said, coming to the end of his story. "But why? And who knows enough about computers to hack my account? The cheerleaders aren't exactly "up" on technology."

"Maybe Brenda's still jealous of you," Rex said. "You know, because we're "dating." Maybe she thinks if she makes it look like you want to be a girl, I'll lose interest in you. So if she can't have me, nobody can." Rex looked quite proud of his little theory, but Kenny only rolled his eyes. Typical Rex, thinking it was all about him somehow. Jeez...

"Whoever did it, I bet they're snickering behind my back right now at me having to go around in a padded bra all week," Kenny said morosely.

"Well, it's only a week," Rex pointed out, being strangely optimistic, and even, dare Kenny say it, supportive. "How much worse can it be than the last two? And then it's all over, at last. And everything will be back to normal! Right? Normal."

"And then you're just going to tell everyone you magically decided to go straight?" Kenny asked, voicing his own worries about the very uncertain future.

"Sure," Rex said with a cavalier shrug. "I'll say it was a phase. Or maybe I'll say seeing you dolled up like this got me thinking girls aren't so bad after all."

"Ha, ha," Kenny said sarcastically. "What about me? Everyone thinks I'm transgendered now!"

"Teens experiment with their sexuality all the time," Rex said. "They'll forget all about it as soon as a new piece of gossip comes along."

"I hope so," Kenny groaned. "I just don't want my yearbook photo to show me in lip gloss and mascara! Ugh, that reminds me, I need to check my makeup..."

"You look fine, honey," Rex said with a sardonic wink.

"Don't you start that again!" Kenny moaned. "This day is bad enough as it is!"

"You good? I gotta go talk to someone."

"Yeah, sure. But I..." As soon as Kenny turned to face him, Rex was already in a full sprint down the hallway.



Principal Buckley, getting a bit of work done on this fine morning, was just putting his feet up and pouring himself another coffee when Rex Manning came storming into his office. He sighed deeply, realizing his third espresso would have to wait. "Yes, Rex?" he asked in a bored tone, straightening his tie.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Rex yelled. "What are you doing to Kenny? What the hell? You're some kind of sadistic pervert! You may want me on that faggy-ass football team of yours, but that's no reason to do that to Kelli! ...I mean Kenny!"

"Such concern for your new friend? That's not like you, Rex." He tapped on a folder on his desk. "That doesn't fit your psychological profile."

"It's not about him! It's about you! Your sick, depraved attempt to get me to joining the football team! Well, I won't do it, no matter what you do in this fake punishment of yours! So you might as well..."

"I never expected you to sign up because of the punishment, Rex."

"Yeah! And another thing... Huh?" Rex had to retrace his footsteps leading up to what the principal had just said. "Wait a minute... So... You didn't think you could get me on the team? Why did you do all this, then? What the fuck?"

"Oh, I'd so like to write you up for that kind of language, Rex. But I think I can let that go. After all, you're about to be our best player on the team!"

"What? But you just said... You're just screwing with my head! Well, your gay couple just lost a member," Rex said. "So you can keep jerking Kenny around, but I'm done."

"Kenny does make a pretty good girl," the principal admitted. "Don't you think so, Rex? It sure would be a shame to lose that. To see him go back to being another anonymous male student. He's much more intriguing this way... You do see that, don't you, Rex?"

"Maybe, but... I don't..."

"Don't you see what I've given you, Rex? This was never about punishment. This was never about that foolhardy 'Lifestyle awareness.' This was to give you a gift. A gift you could never, ever give up."

"The fuck are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about you, Rex. Your psychological profile." Principal Buckley tapped the folder on his desk again, and opened it. "After you so strenuously

objected to joining the team, I had to figure out why. You said you didn't want to wear a football costume and dress up. Very unusual language." He read through a page. "Fixation on the masculine versus the feminine. Anti-social. Externalized aggression. Unable to maintain an intimate relationship with a member of either sex. A loner. That makes you a classic case."

"Classic case of what?" Rex growled.

"Classic case of a transsexual enthusiast."

"What? Enthusiast? What is that supposed to mean? Are you calling me a tranny?"

"No, no. It means, Rex, that you like your girls with a little something extra. You like your girls as... Ex men. You like trannies. That's what turns you on. It's where you get your kicks."

"You're lying," Rex said, the ever-present confidence his voice suddenly gone.

"It's all in the findings. The research." He closed the folder. "You, dear child, like the ladyboys."

"No. It's not true. That's just something you made up."

"All right then, I'll just call off the punishment then. I'll have Kenny back in his cords and sweatshirts within the hour."

"Well... Don't do that. I mean... I just... It's not a punishment if you do that."

The principal smiled. His little trap had worked. It had caught the mouse. "Oh? Well, I don't think it would be fair to let you just walk away from this and keep poor Kenny in feminine finery."

Rex suddenly realized what he was indicating by objecting. He looked like he was verifying everything Principal Buckley was saying about him. But Rex knew the old man was full of it. He didn't know what he was talking about. "Hey... Just do that. I don't care. Makes no difference to me."

"Of course." The principal smiled. "So we'll just call the whole thing off. I'll let Kenny know he's free to dress and act as he pleases. You're off the hook and the two of you go your separate ways."

"Fine," Rex said, looking at the ground. "That's fine."

"Now, I could also extend the punishment, and require Kenny to stay as he is now, as a vulnerable, impressionable boy in girl's clothing, looking to you for help and for companionship." The principal picked up the phone. "But if you're so certain, I'll just let everyone know to call it off." He began to dial. "Now, if you did want to join the football team, that might change things."

Rex was quick to speak up. "What? Um... Just talking theoretically... Change things how?"

Principal Buckley paused in his dialing. "If you were to accept your punishment, and join the team, I could make sure Kelli stays on 'her' current path."

Rex's attention turned inward as his eyes grew concerned. Buckley could tell the kid was having a big debate within himself. He wasn't surprised, as he guessed Rex had to suspect that he was attracted to transexuals, but hadn't been totally honest with himself about it. Now he was being faced with a truth he didn't like. But Buckley had a plan to push him over the edge and take the deal.

"That's not all," the old man said with a smile. "I can offer you a GPA boost and a lifetime supply of free curly fries at the cafeteria..."

Rex frowned. The curly fries were notoriously good, and nearly always ran out quickly, and he liked the idea of not having to work for his grades. But both of them knew it was "Kelli" who was the main factor here.

"Do I have to give you an answer right now?"

"Yes," Buckley said. He opened his desk drawer and retrieved the football sign-up forms and handed them to Rex.

"I want his locker moved next to mine," Rex said.

"You have yourself a deal, young man," Principal Buckley said, reaching across his desk. "Pen?"

Rex grabbed it and signed up.



Fortunately for his sanity, Kenny found that the day actually got easier as it went on. It seemed that all of the staff, and a good number of students, had already been briefed on Kenny's "coming out," meaning he was referred to as "Kelli" by basically everyone, and only a scant few said it with disbelieving tones. Several girls came up to him to compliment him and ask how long he had known he was transgender, and how long Rex had known, and a few other personal questions Kenny did his best to dispel. At lunch, the cheerleaders all crowded around to ooh and ahh over Brenda's handiwork, and congratulate him on being so brave.

"So, what do you think, Rex?" Stephanie asked. "Is it hot seeing your cute little boyfriend turned into your sexy girlfriend? Or do you, like, want the old Kenny back?"

To Rex's credit, he looked equal parts embarrassed and horrified by the question. "Uh..." he said. "The important thing is who's on the inside, and that hasn't changed one bit."

"Oh my God, you are so romantic!" Stephanie whimpered. "Come on, Kelli, that totally deserves a kiss!" The other girls all agreed, clapping excitedly, and,

bowing to the peer pressure, Kenny leaned forward with a pretty blush on his cheeks and gave Rex a chaste peck on his manly, stubble-covered cheek. It was enough to satisfy the girls, who changed topics and began talking about Tolerance Week.

After lunch, Rex walked Kenny to his next class, and by this time there was a lot less staring. Remarkably, everyone seemed to have gotten over the fact that he was wearing a skirt much faster than they had gotten over his pierced ears and V-necks and flamboyant haircut from before. By the end of the school day, even a few guys, who had once either ignored or teased Kenny back when he was just a nondescript eager-to-please wannabe, came up and congratulated him on becoming a "smoking hot chick," though all were quite careful with their words when Rex was nearby. A few guys refused outright to believe that Kenny had ever been a boy at all, instead spreading a bizarre rumor that he had just been a lesbian tomboy who had now finally blossomed and decided to try out boys for a change.

As uncomfortable as Kenny was, it seemed like Rex was increasingly the opposite: he seemed much more at ease having a "transgender" girlfriend than a boyfriend, and was even somewhat friendly to Kenny. For a fleeting moment, after Rex insisted on opening the door for him and carrying all his books, Kenny couldn't help but think that maybe wearing a miniskirt had its benefits. Was it because Rex felt more natural with "Kelli"? Or was he still trying to make up for their fight the previous week? Kenny knew he should be suspicious, but he couldn't help but enjoy the change — it was a lot better than constantly being snapped and glowered at.

When the final bell rang, Kenny high-tailed it to his locker, eager to get his things and get out of the public eye. But for some reason, his locker wouldn't open! He then noticed a note on the front: "Due to an accounting error, contents moved to 216." Now he had to walk down to a completely different part of the hallway.

"Hey," Rex said. "Looks like they moved you closer to me."

Kenny gave Rex a suspicious look. That was quite the coincidence, having his locker suddenly moved to be right next to Rex's. But he was too flummoxed to really think about it. "Great," he said. His bra straps were bugging him and he was eager to get home and change out of the annoying skirt and top — after all, there was no rule saying he had to dress like a chick in the privacy of his own house. Maybe he could even get changed before his family saw him! Normally Rex was the one who was in the biggest hurry to get away from the school, but this time it was Kenny who was all but dragging Rex outside. When he arrived at the front of the school, however, he was surprised to see the family car waiting at the curb with both his mother and sister Sara inside. From the way his sister was eagerly searching through the open window, Kenny had a feeling he wasn't going to get away without introducing "Kelli" to her.

"She never picks me up," Kenny groaned. "They must know about... You know." He indicated his miniskirt with one hand, sighing. "Might as well get this over with, I guess I'll see you tomorrow." He automatically gave Rex a quick hug, then hurried away to the waiting vehicle. His sister was looking through the window, but didn't seem to notice him at all until he was mere feet away, at which point her expression was only puzzled.

"Uh, Sara?" Kenny said, miffed that she hadn't recognized him. "It's me!" His sister's face changed immediately to an expression of incredulous delight.

"Kenny?" she gasped. "Oh my god! I always knew you'd make a cute girl, but this is something else... You look hot, sis!"

"Goodness," Kenny's mom agreed. "I hardly recognize you! Who's clothes?"

"The girls let me borrow some stuff," Kenny muttered, embarrassed. "Can we please just go?"

"Sorry," his mom said. "I'm embarrassing you, aren't I? Nobody wants their mom coming to pick them up, I was going to let Sara go alone, but I just couldn't wait to see my daughter for the week..." She reached back and unlocked the door for him. Kenny quickly got inside, managing to flash his panties by accident, and closed the door behind him.

"Your lady-like entry could use a little work," Sara remarked wryly. "Or was that for Rex's benefit?" Kenny blushed beet red.

"Rex who?" he asked, feigning ignorance.

"Don't try to bullshit me, little sis," Sara grinned. "I know you're dating some hunk named Rex Manning. I'm friends with Stephanie's older cousin, remember? So, does he like you in a skirt?"

"Sara, knock it off," his mom said sternly. "You're embarrassing him even more. Does Rex need a ride home? I know you two usually walk together."

"No!" Kenny wailed. "Can we please just go?"

"Okay, okay," his sister grinned. "Don't get your panties in a bunch..."



Apparently his father had been briefed about "Tolerance Week" and his son's part in it, because rather than having a heart attack at seeing his male heir in a miniskirt, he merely said, in a pained voice, that he looked "like a pretty convincing girl" and that if he was going to wear a skirt that short, he would be expected to abide by Sara's old curfew. It seemed like Kenny was the only one who didn't find that jab very funny — there had been enough guys checking out his legs in the halls today that he understood where his dad might be coming from!

So, with his dad's blessing, his mom and sister both took full advantage of the opportunity to have another female in the house. Rather than changing back into his boy clothes, Kenny found himself up in Sara's room, being made to try on a few of her old outfits so he wouldn't have to "borrow" from the cheerleaders so much. There were a few advantages to this, such as being able to pick out a few pairs of feminine jeans and slacks rather than skirts, but after seeing his shameful display getting into the car, Sara was determined to teach about those, too.

"No, thanks," Kenny said. "Look, it's bad enough having to dress up at school, so..."

"You volunteered for this, Kenny," his mom interjected. "And your principal specifically requested that we help you learn the ins-and-outs of girlhood, so you can really experience how much effort it takes some transgender students to learn to 'pass' as female." As proof, she waved an all-too-familiar pink envelope with instructions no doubt inside. Kenny groaned.

"That means I finally get to have a little sister to boss around," Sara grinned. "So, let's get started!" In the first edition of what she termed "girly lessons," Kenny had to learn how to manage a short skirt: how to smooth it daintily under his butt when he sat down, to avoid it riding up, how to keep his legs together and kneel down to pick things off the floor, and how to swing his legs inside an imaginary car. He tried to whine to his mom to get out of it, but he received no sympathy, as she thought it was important for him to see what things were like on the 'other side' of the tracks. So, resigned to his fate, Kenny spent the rest of the day learning feminine body language, even submitting to a pair of Sara's high heels.

"I see you've done this before," she giggled, when he stood up with only a hint of wobbliness. Kenny flushed.

"The cheerleading team dressed me up as a joke," he explained. "That's what got me into this mess."

"I think it's great," Sara beamed. "Tolerance Week is an awesome idea, and I think you'll really learn a few things. Heck, it might even, you know, 'awaken' something you didn't know you had inside you."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kenny asked worriedly, wondering what exactly Principal Buckley had put in his letter.

"Oh, nothing," Sara said innocently. "But I know this macho act is just for my benefit. You're enjoying this a lot more than you let on!"

Realizing that arguing would get him nowhere — Buckley had once again gotten him into a tight corner — Kenny just rolled his eyes and did what his mom and sister asked of him. His ankles were killing him by the time they were satisfied with his progress, and he was relieved to sit down at the computer, eager to escape reality with a favorite computer game. However, a new email



notification caught his eye. He opened it up and groaned in frustration. It was from Principal Buckley. In addition to going to school dressed up as a girl, he apparently had homework, as well! He clicked the several links, finding video tutorials for hair and makeup, and clips of transgender teens talking about their

experiences. Kenny scrolled downward and read the note attached to the email aloud.

"At the end of the week, you will be evaluated through a role-play interview," he read. "I will ask you what you've learned from being a transgendered person for the week, what you've learned about what it's like to live as transgendered, and you will answer to the best of your ability. I suggest you study these videos well, and come to a better understanding of the transgender experience."

Kenny sighed audibly. Principal Buckley sure didn't take any half measures, that was for sure. Determined not to give his principal any reason to extend the program, Kenny buckled in to start learning everything he could about being transgender. He only needed to get through the week, and do it right, and then after that he was finally free.



When Kenny showed up to school the next morning, the cosmetics girls were delighted to see he had his falls in properly and had made an amateurish, if well-intentioned, attempt at doing his makeup. He was wearing a pair of his sister's skinny jeans, a flower-patterned top, and blocky sandals with a hint of heel to them. However, that didn't mean he got off scot-free. On the contrary, the girls had big plans for his second day as "Kelli".

"Extensions!" Brenda announced happily. "And nice ones, too. We're really running up the bill. These will basically feel like your own hair, and you won't have to take them out."

"Joy," Kenny said through gritted teeth. As it turned out, putting in hair extensions revealed itself to be a very painstaking, time-intensive process, meaning they could only finish half of the process in the allotted hour. Kenny had another 'free pass' to skip his morning class, assured it wouldn't effect his grade — Principal Buckley seemed to think what he was doing was more important than algebra! While they worked away attaching the extensions to his actual hair, they also had ample time to remove Kenny's poor attempt at makeup and show him again how to do the 'cute but casual' look they had demonstrated last time. They scolded him to pay closer attention, and, knowing now what was at stake, Kenny tried harder than ever to absorb the information. Since he was wearing open-toed sandals, they also trimmed and painted his toe-nails to match his fingers.

When the bell cut their 'beautifying' time short, the girls gave Kenny a beanie-style hat to cover up the unfinished extensions higher on his head. As he went over to look in the mirror, Kenny was confronted once more by "Kelli," the cute co-ed. Her makeup was impeccable, and she even managed to make the hat look stylish. He was slightly disturbed by the inescapable fact that he made a much better looking girl than he did a guy. Even more disturbing was the fact that nobody seemed to mind! Now that the initial shock had worn off,

he more or less went about his day as he normally would have. The only difference was having to stop and touch up his lip gloss a few times at Stephanie's suggestion, and then a brief panic over which bathroom to use until he remembered Principal Buckley had recently taken the signs off both, deeming it 'discriminatory.'

Kenny was getting better at dealing with long hair and nails, and walking in slight heels wasn't a big challenge after the workout his sister had put him through the previous day. Once again, Rex did his part as the 'boyfriend' and walked him to and from class. He seemed to be in a much better mood than Kenny was — Kenny figured that maybe he was counting his lucky stars he wasn't the one who had been accused of transphobia! The girls were as friendly as ever, but Kenny also noticed some of the guys, who had still been weirded out seeing Kenny and Rex together, were much friendlier now that it was "Kelli" and Rex.

"You seem to be making some progress, Kelli," Principal Buckley said, surprising Kenny at his locker. "I hope that you're doing your homework, as well. Your test is on Friday, if you'll recall, and I hate to think of what might happen if you don't pass it."

Kenny smiled at Principal Buckley as he walked away, but as soon as he left he was gritting his teeth in a grimace. When he got home, he threw himself into his second round of 'girly lessons' with aplomb, and spent the evening practicing his makeup over and over again while listening to audio recordings about transgenderism that Buckley had sent him. He wasn't going to give his psycho principal any reason to fail him, that was for sure. And didn't that gasbag have more important things to worry about, anyways? Apparently the district was sending an administrator or something to evaluate him. No wonder all the janitors were working overtime making everything spotless.



Wednesday passed in much the same manner as Tuesday, with the girls finishing his extensions, redoing his nails, and showing him a few more cosmetic tips. Everybody was in the habit of calling him "Kelli" now, even the teachers, and Kenny was in the habit of responding to it. To test his progress at home, he agreed to wear higher heels to school on Wednesday, and managed them admirably. It was strange hearing the obtrusive clicking noise they made on the hallway tiles — once he had always looked up at the sound, eager to see an attractive girl wearing those symbols of sexy femininity, but now he was the one making guys look. And, since he had paired the heels with a slit skirt, they didn't seem disappointed by the view, either. What a bunch of horndogs! They knew full well he was a guy, but they were still checking out his legs. It would have been funny if it weren't so embarrassing.



After school, Kenny continued with his homework. His sister was delighted at how quickly he was picking up a more "feminine" posture and way of moving, and was eager to add some of the finer touches, like speaking with his hands more and cocking one hip when he stood still. Buckley's homework, meanwhile, had shifted over into voice lessons. Closing the door to his room so nobody could hear him making a fool of himself, Kenny faithfully did the exercises designed to help him raise the pitch of his voice and give it a female cadence. The worst part? He wasn't half bad at it! After only an hour, he could do a credible imitation of his sister, and tucked the fact away for future reference in case he ever needed to pretend to be her on the telephone for a prank. He also watched more videos of actual young transgender people, explaining how they felt trapped in the wrong body and had always identified more with the opposite gender. It was a lot different from being gay, as Kenny was quickly learning.



On Thursday morning, the cosmetology girls took an extra long time with his makeup, giving him a sultry cat's eye look with lots of layers of eyeshadow, and plumping his lips before filling them in with a dripping wet nude gloss that was a little too 'sexy' for Kenny's taste — he didn't like having lips that looked like they were practically begging for something to suck on. They styled his hair for him too, giving him waves and 'pumping up' the volume. At first he thought they were just experimenting, but as Brenda dropped the lip gloss she'd used into his purse for later touch-ups, she revealed the truth.

"I know it's a little much for school, but I figured evening makeup was still a little beyond you," Brenda said. "So long as you don't smudge anything, you should still look good for tonight's date."

"Tonight's... What?" Kenny asked, wide-eyed.

"Rex said he's taking you out as 'Kelli' tonight," Brenda said casually. "Oops, did I ruin a surprise? Don't worry, girlfriend, you'll look hot. Call me if you need to borrow an outfit or anything!" She paused thoughtfully. "Oh, and by the way, we're not supposed to help you tomorrow. You do your own makeup and hair, okay?"

"Fine, sure," Kenny said distractedly. He hurried to English as quickly as he could in his heels — his sister had lent him another pair to try — and waited impatiently for a chance to interrogate Rex about the so-called date.

"I got another pink envelope," Rex said with a shrug. "It said that in order to help you understand how, uh, transgender youth might feel in the world at large, I'm supposed to take you to the mall this evening. It's not a big deal."

"Let me see it," Kenny asked. "I want to know what he said. Like I would go on a date with you!"

"I... Uh... Threw it away," Rex said, scratching the back of his neck. "Like I said, the mall is no big deal."

"Not a big deal?" Kenny hissed. Up until now, he had been 'Kelli' at school, and at home, but never anywhere else... His sister had agreed to drive him home the whole week, after he pleaded that he didn't want anyone seeing him on his walk home. She'd laughed at his anxiousness over being recognized by some nosy neighbor, assuring him he was way too cute to be mistaken for a guy, but had agreed to his request.

The mall, however, was a totally different story. Kenny knew he looked like a girl to the eye, but what about his voice and mannerisms? If he messed up and did something mannish at school or home, it didn't matter. But in front of a huge audience of strangers in the mall... What if someone realized he was a cross-dressed boy? Kenny shook in terror at the thought. But then again, that was probably what Buckley wanted... For him to realize how difficult it was for transgender teens in public settings.

"I'll pick you up at seven," Rex said, wiggling his eyebrows. "Wear something sexy, will you? If I have to go on a date with a hot little tranny, I at least want her to look good."

"Shut up!" Kenny tried to punch his 'boyfriend's' arm, but with his long nails, only ended up scratching himself. Being a girl was a bigger pain in the butt than he could have imagined...



As soon as Kenny got home, he'd thrown himself into his new "voice lessons" — the last thing he wanted was to be given away in public by talking in too deep or manly a fashion. He'd managed to raise the pitch quite a bit, and was working hard to develop a more lilting, feminine cadence as well. After that, he begged his sister for both a refresher on body language — sitting, standing, walking, the works — and a "crash course" on date etiquette. When she managed to stop *oohing* and *aahing* over the fact that her little brother was going on his first date — as a girl, no less — she was actually quite helpful, giving him some basic knowledge on how to behave in a restaurant, what to order, and when to go to the bathroom to check his makeup.

"Let Rex take the lead," she suggested with a wink. "Guys like that. The most important thing you have to worry about is picking an outfit... He said seven, right?" Kenny would have been all too happy just to go in the outfit he'd worn to school, but Sara insisted on dragging him through her wardrobe to pick out something more 'special' to go with his dramatic makeup and carefully styled hair. As it turned out, in his sister's opinion, 'special' meant a dress. Kenny tried to argue with her, claiming he would have less to worry about if he wore a pair of jeans, but she shot right back with the logic that if he was wearing a dress, it would help remind him to move in a feminine manner at all times. She used the same logic to get him into a pair of heels, though he negotiated down to a two-inch heel. When seven o'clock finally rolled around, Kenny was as nervous as any girl on her first date, or perhaps even more so.

"Okay, I think I'm ready," Kenny said anxiously, stepping out of the bathroom. "How do I look?" He struck a pose, putting one manicured hand on his hip. He was wearing a flirty little mint green summer dress that was one of his sister's old favorites ("So don't you dare spill anything on it!" she had warned) that had a lacy, crochet-style top, through which the fabric of his bra was clearly visible, and a pleated skirt that swirled merrily around his smooth-shaven thighs. He had redone his fingernails and toenails in a matching mint green, displayed prettily by a pair of open-toed cork wedge sandals with a two-inch heel. The outfit was completed by several bracelet on his wrists and a pair of dangly earrings. With his dark brown hair blown out in immaculate waves around his pretty face, which was all made-up with the cosmetology girls' dramatic 'smoky eye' look and sexy nude lip gloss, 'Kelli' was, well...

"Gorgeous!" Sara squealed. "Oh my God, little sis, you look *hot*."

"Thanks," Kenny said, blushing. "I guess."

"You redid your nails?" Sara asked in wonder. "And is that perfume I smell?" Kenny blushed even deeper.

"Mom said I could borrow a little," he said meekly. "I wanted to be extra pretty and feminine so nobody suspects I'm a guy! I have to say, this dress didn't seem as short when you wore it..." He tugged anxiously at the hem to no avail.

"Well, you're a bit leggier than me," Sara pointed out. "Good luck keeping Rex's hands off them!" Kenny blushed an even deeper shade of crimson, opening his mouth to protest her teasing, but just then the doorbell rang.

"Kelli, your date is here!" Kenny heard his mother call a moment later, with obvious amusement.

"Okay!" Kenny squeaked, using his best feminine soprano as he observed his reflection in the mirror one last time. "Coming!" He quickly picked up the purse Brenda had given him, settling it on his shoulder with all the feminine grace of a real girl, then minced quickly towards the door. The heels gave him a seductive wiggle to his hips that Sara couldn't help but giggle over. To think, all the times Kenny had teased her when she got ready for a big date, and here he was swishing out the door in a cute little dress and with a big strong boyfriend awaiting!

And Rex wasn't to be disappointed, either: when Kenny came to the door, his date's mouth fell open in amazement. Kenny felt just the tiniest bit proud that he had managed to elicit such a reaction. Obviously his hard work had paid off, and if things went his way, he would pass Buckley's fake interview the next day with flying colors and then never wear a dress again in his life.

"Wow," Rex gasped. "You, uh, you look great, Kelli."

"I know," Kenny said sourly. "Come on, let's get this over with..."

"Be sure to call us if you're going to be out late," his mom called after them, as Kenny allowed Rex to escort him to the car. "Or if you're sleeping over!"

"Mo-om!" Kenny groaned, but Rex only chuckled. He seemed to still be in his mysterious good mood, even though he had absolutely hated taking Kenny out on their fake 'dates' before. He even opened the passenger side door of the car so Kenny could get in, gracefully sliding butt-first onto the seat before swinging his locked-together legs in after him, just as he had practiced. Despite his sister's assurances of how well he passed for a girl, Kenny was still trembling with nervousness as they drove, bunching up the hem of his skirt in his manicured hands.

"Hey, relax," Rex said, glancing over. "Nobody's going to think you're anything other than a chick, believe me. You look hotter than any of the cheerleaders at our crummy school, that's for sure."

"That doesn't change the fact I'm about to walk through the mall in a dress and heels!" Kenny griped. "This cannot be good for my psyche, I don't care what Buckley thinks."

"Yeah, Buckley's a loon," Rex said. "But this is the last week, and tomorrow's the last day, so let's do it right and prove we learned our lesson about homophobia, and transphobia, and whatever." He parked the car, and then, to Kenny's surprise, reached over and gave him a comforting pat on the hand. "We're in this together, still," he reminded him. "Come on." He got out, and

then came around to open Kenny's door for him once more like a gentleman. Kenny stared nervously across the parking lot, looking at all the uneven ground he would have to navigate on his heels, and hoping the breeze wouldn't whip up the bottom of his dress. Rex offered his arm.

"Okay," he said tremulously, taking Rex's support. "Let's get this over with..."

~❦~

All in all, their second trip to the mall together couldn't have been more different from the first. Remembering back to how Rex had spent the whole time scowling and glaring, humiliated to be 'dating' another guy — not caring one iota for how embarrassed Kenny himself was — it was hard to believe that this Rex was even the same guy! Maybe it was because he was wearing pressed pants and a fancy shirt instead of his usual ripped jeans and black T's, but this Rex was friendly, charming, and talkative, a far cry from the anti-social rebel he usually projected at school. He had brought them to a retro burger place that was currently very popular and trendy, and wasted no time getting them a great booth and placing both their orders with a very surprised and snooty-looking waiter. Kenny was still terribly nervous about sitting in a restaurant with his legs prettily crossed, made up to the nines as another guy's hot date (especially since the waiter wasted no opportunity to try to look down his dress or "accidentally" touch his leg), but Rex eventually managed to put him at ease with his jokes and easy-going conversation about anything and everything. Rex actually seemed happy to be in Kenny's company, listening to Kenny make a few jokes of his own as he warmed to the conversation, and laughing even when he flubbed the punch-line, as he so often did.

Before Kenny knew it, he was actually having fun, too. This was what he had dreamed of way back when he had agreed to help Rex spray-paint the abandoned class-room: hanging out with a cool kid, cracking jokes, laughing, and paling around. Of course, he hadn't pictured himself doing it in a flirty little summer dress and makeup, but he had to take his victories where he could. He couldn't believe how nice Rex was being to him — maybe he really did want to be friends after all. By the time the bill arrived, Kenny was in a great mood, although that changed a little when he saw the price written there.

"Wow, this place was more expensive than I thought," he whispered, reaching into his purse. He didn't think he had more than a twenty-dollar bill inside.

"Don't worry, it's on me," Rex grinned. "Hey, why don't you go to the bathroom and fix your makeup? It's a little smudged."

"Oh, shoot!" Kenny exclaimed, using his new girlish vocabulary. "This is so embarrassing! I'll be right back." He quickly put his purse on his shoulder and stood up, mincing his way towards the ladies' bathroom. He'd been worried about having company, but fortunately it was a tiny, one-at-a-time bathroom, and the woman who exited before him didn't seem to notice anything amiss



about him, even smiling and complimenting him on his dress! Kenny thanked her and quickly stepped inside the bathroom, locking the door behind him. He'd been expecting a huge mess, but to his puzzlement, his makeup still looked perfect. Had Rex just been teasing him?

"Kelli!" came a familiar voice. Kenny jumped. Crouched at the window, was none other than Rex! What on Earth was going on?

"What the hell are you doing?" Kenny demanded, in a less-than-ladylike manner. "And why did you tell me my makeup was smeared, it looks fine to me..."

"Here, grab my hand," Rex grinned. "I told the waiter I had to run out to the car and grab my credit card. He was a little suspicious, but made sure he was watching when you went to the bathroom. He could hardly take his eyes off your ass, the poor guy! Were you wiggling it like that on purpose?"

"What!" Kenny blustered. "No, of course not! So did you get your credit card?"

"I don't have a credit card," Rex chuckled. "Kelli, you can be kind of a ditz sometimes. Come on, take my hand. We're dining and dashing, babe." Kenny couldn't decide which he resented more, the 'ditz' remark or the 'babe' pet name, but at the same time he felt a thrill of excitement, just as he'd gotten when Rex recruited him to help graffiti the classroom. He felt a little guilty as he awkwardly clambered up onto the toilet while wearing his heels, but only until he remembered what a jerk the waiter had been, and how he'd ogled him shamelessly. As for the kitchen, this restaurant was ridiculously overpriced, so surely they wouldn't miss one meal? Kenny nearly lost his footing as someone knocked loudly on the door. His eyes went wide with fright.

"Um, just a minute!" he called, in his most feminine soprano. Rex nodded approvingly. Kenny raised his arms and let Rex reach down and pull him through, careful not to snag Sara's precious dress on the way out. It was a little embarrassing how easily Rex could lift him, but Kenny didn't have time to worry about it as they hurried to the car, giggling like maniacs. Now this was a thrill! Kenny clicked along on his high heels, taking two quick swishing steps for every one of Rex's, lending his butt a distinct feminine sway that turned more than a few heads in the parking lot. While Rex had been glaring and hunched over before, angry to be seen with Kenny, now he was smiling and had a casual, proud posture. He was more than happy to show off his date, and Kenny, even though it was embarrassing being treated like eye candy, felt kind of proud to be with Rex, too. He was cool, rebellious, and tall — and more than a few girls had given Kenny looks of jealousy! As for the lustful guys, they weren't nearly as intimidating with Rex there to put a possessive arm around his waist.

"That was a lot of fun," Rex grinned, as they finally arrived back at Kenny's house.

"Yeah!" Kenny said, still surprised by just how cool the evening had been. "Maybe we could do it again sometime. I mean, not with me in a dress, but..."

"Maybe," Rex shrugged, cutting him off. "Anyway, good luck on your interview thing tomorrow."

"Oh," Kenny said, deflating slightly at Rex's quick dismissal. "Uh, thanks." He got out of the car and headed towards his front porch, heels clicking noisily on the driveway. He did need to think about the interview... Brenda had said they weren't going to help him with his hair or makeup, so he would have to be ready before he left for school in the morning. One little mock interview with Buckley, and it would all be over...



There was a bit of a buzz in the air when Kenny arrived at school the next morning. He was content that his hair and makeup, with a little help from his sister, passed muster. He had also worn one of his sister's girlier outfits, a pleated skirt and floral-printed blouse, with a pair of three-inch heels to go with them. It would show Buckley that he was taking his education on transgenderism seriously, after all.

The reason for the buzz was, of course, the visit from the district office. The school personnel wanted to keep everything looking perfect, and the students wanted to see who the visitor was. This time, it was some lady looking around, talking to students, sticking her head into classes and generally behaving like she owned the place. Kenny saw the woman a few times between classes, but he was too worried about the mock-interview with Buckley to pay much

attention to her. At lunch hour, as he'd been instructed, he went straight to Principal Buckley's office instead of the cafeteria.

"Well, Kelli, it's time to see if you've learned anything," Principal Buckley announced the instant he stepped through the door. "I was originally going to do this myself, but after I explained your situation to Miss Delfino from the district office, she volunteered to give you the mock interview. You'll still be role-playing as Kelli, the transgendered student, naturally, and she'll ask you questions about your school and personal life. If you give convincing answers, I'll be able to tell that you've really learned something about the transgender experience, and your punishment will be over. Understood?"

"What if I don't get enough answers right?" Kenny asked tremulously, sitting down in the indicated seat.

"I have complete faith in you," Buckley said sternly, surprising him. "You'll do fine. Let me check and see if she's ready for you." Buckley got up and left into the adjacent room, leaving Kenny alone with his heart pounding furiously with nerves. A minute later Kenny heard the sound of Principal Buckley approaching, accompanied by the clicking noise he now knew, first hand, was only made by high heels. The door opened, and Principal Buckley entered with the district representative.

"This is Ms. Delfino," the principal said. She was an attractive, friendly-looking Hispanic woman in her forties, wearing a sleek business suit and skirt with professional-looking heels. "And here, as requested, is Kelli," Buckley said, gesturing towards Kenny. "She's quite the busy bee, the center of attention here at school, but she made time for this little interview." Kenny frowned in confusion — Buckley was taking this thing too seriously.

"Hello, Kelli," Ms. Delfino said warmly. "Pleasure to meet you. What a lovely skirt!"

"Thank you," Kenny said, blushing slightly. "It's a hand-me-down. Um, nice to meet you, too." He smoothed out his skirt and rose daintily to his feet to give her a limp-wristed handshake, just as his sister's comportment lessons had taught him. He then resumed his seat gracefully, keeping his knees together and tucking one ankle behind the other in a very girlish pose, hands in his lap. It was embarrassing how natural the feminine motions felt after only a week of 'girly' lessons. Ms. Delfino took the seat across from him.

"I'll leave you two to get to know each other," Principal Buckley said, then disappeared, shutting the door behind him. Ms. Delfino turned to face Kenny. "Such an interesting man, your principal," she said. "And he's really made this a great school, hasn't he? But enough about him, let's talk about you, shall we?"

"Okay," Kenny said hesitantly.

"So, your principal tells me you're a senior?" Ms. Delfino prodded, gently.

"Yes," Kenny said. "Last year of high school..."

"And could you have possibly imagined your last year of high school would be like this?" Ms. Delfino asked. "Was coming out as transgendered easier or more difficult than you hoped?"

"Uh, I never really gave it thought, but, harder, I guess," he said, quickly.

"So how long do most transgendered people identify as transgender?" Ms. Delfino asked, which sounded like a question from the videos he'd watched.

"Pretty much their whole life," Kenny said, remembering what the videos had taught. "They've never felt comfortable in their bodies," Kenny repeated, for Ms. Delfino's benefit.

"I see," Ms. Delfino said, writing something down on her clipboard. She hadn't seemed to notice anything amiss, and Kenny breathed a sigh of relief. She continued asking basic questions about his family, how well he was fitting in at school, and other such things. "Are you comfortable in your body?"

"I have never been less comfortable," Kenny said, honestly, fidgeting with his bra strap.

"Mmm-Hmm..." Ms. Delfino hummed. "Describe to me what being transgendered means to you."

"Well," Kenny had to give this one a lot of thought. "It means that being uncomfortable in your body is something that can keep you from being the person you always were meant to be."

"And what steps do people like that usually take?"

"Uh, what?" Kenny asked, caught off-guard.

"What steps do they take to deal with their issues?" Ms. Delfino asked once more. "Would you take hormones, for instance? Or plan on surgery?"

"Uh..." Kenny trailed off. Surgery? He hadn't even considered he'd get that kind of question. "Yes!" he stammered. He tried to remember from the videos what other transgender teens had said about surgery. "I'd want surgery on my... My... For my boobs!" Kenny exclaimed, then flushed bright red as he realized what he'd just said.

"I see," Ms. Delfino said, obviously noting Kenny's vermillion blush. "No need to be embarrassed, Kelli. We can talk about those things in confidence. Now, what are your reasons for wanting breast enhancement?"

Kenny cursed himself internally for saying something so crude, but what was done was done. "Well, to make me feel more feminine," Kenny said. "I'd feel more like a real woman and less like I'm just playing pretend. And it would let everyone else know that I'm serious, too, I guess? I know that sounds silly..."

"That's not silly at all," Ms. Delfino said comfortingly. "Those are all perfectly good reasons. Can I ask what's been stopping you? Your family seems to be supportive of you."

"Uh..." Kenny trailed off again. He wasn't sure how this conversation had gone from talking about 'transgendered people' to him specifically, but he supposed he was just being asked to put himself in the shoes of a transgendered person. After all, she knew this was just a role-play exercise.

"Is it a financial matter?" Ms. Delfino suggested.

"Yes!" Kenny said eagerly. "Yes, that's it. I can't afford boobs. Oh well. Too bad, right?"

"It is," Ms. Delfino said. "Quite a shame. You're a very lovely young lady with or without them, though."

"Oh, uh, thanks," Kenny replied quickly.

"Well, it's been a pleasure speaking with you, Kelli," Ms. Delfino said. "You seem like a very well adjusted young person, and well on your way to being a beautiful woman, as well."

"Boy, that's good to hear," Kenny said, relief flooding through him as Ms. Delfino got up from her seat. He did the same. "Does this mean I pass?" he asked eagerly, hoping his three weeks in Bizarro-land were over at last. To his puzzlement, Ms. Delfino chuckled slightly.

"Kelli, you pass as well as any transgender teen I've ever met," she said. "If I hadn't been shown last year's yearbook photo I would've had no idea, honestly."

Kenny was hopelessly confused by her answer, but before he could so much as open his mouth to ask for clarification on the interview, the door swung open and Principal Buckley strode in.

"I hope I'm not cutting you short," he said. "But Kelli does need to get to class, and I don't want to disrupt my students' schedules any more than is absolutely necessary."

"Oh, we were just finishing," Ms. Delfino said.

"Well, let me show you to your car," the principal offered, as they both left.

Sitting for a moment longer to collect himself, Kenny got up and set off in search of Rex. He was barely out of the office, however, when Rex found him.

"Well?" he demanded. "Did you knock it out of the park, or what?"

"She said I passed, but Principal Buckley left before I could ask them about anything," Kenny said worriedly. "But I mean, it's been a week, hasn't it? And I passed the interview... So it's all over, isn't it?"

"Definitely," Rex said. "So I guess everything can finally go back to normal... No more having to spend lunch hour together, or go to the mall together, or do homework together, or any of that dumb crap." Even as he said the disparaging words, however, his face had an almost crestfallen look. Kenny didn't want to get his own hopes up, but was it possible that Rex Manning, resident tough guy and cool kid, would actually miss hanging out with a dweeb like him? They'd

certainly had fun running away from the restaurant the other night...



"Yeah," Kenny said. "Woohoo! No more, uh, no more dumb crap." He paused awkwardly. "Thanks for helping me with the test. I don't even want to know what a Week Four would have looked like."

"Yeah, me either," Rex said. "Well, I gotta get to class. Guess you can walk to yours on your own, now. See you around on Monday... Or maybe not..." He gave a shrug of his shoulders, then turned and walked away. Kenny frowned. Had Rex actually started to enjoy his company? Did the end of Week Three mean the end of what might have been becoming an honest-to-God friendship? Kenny gritted his teeth in misery. All he'd wanted from the start was to be friends with Rex, and he'd come incredibly close without even realizing it. Hanging out with him at the restaurant had been the time of his life. But now, Rex was going to go back to his old ways, smoking cigarettes in the parking lot and skipping class rather than spending time with Kenny, and before long he would be treating him like dirt all over again.

"Whatever," Kenny said to himself. "I have other friends now. The cheerleaders like me..." He trailed off. Now that Week Three was over and he could stop dressing as a girl, would the cheerleaders lose interest in him? Would it seem like a step down to have him just be their "gay" friend again? And if he tried to tell them he was straight, would they feel angry and deceived by him? "I can worry about all that later," Kenny muttered to himself. "For now, focus on the positives. After class I'm going home and changing clothes, and then I'm never going to wear a frigging skirt ever again."

Satisfied with that thought, Kenny headed off towards his class, realizing how strange it felt not to have Rex there by his side on the way.



"So what do we do next?" Rex asked, as he snuck into Principal Buckley's office after lunch.

"Leave that up to me," the principal said, with a satisfied look on his face. "Pretty soon, that poor kid won't know what gender he really is."

"What do I have to do?"

"Just be there to support your new friend, Rex. And don't forget to report to practice after school. I hear the coach likes the cut of your jib. He might start you this upcoming week."

"Whatever. Look, what about that lady from the district office? Is she going to screw everything up?"

"Ms. Delfino?" The principal laughed, heartily. "No! She cleans my house on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I gave her five hundred to pretend to be a school official for the day. Now get back to class."



Kenny had every intention of changing out of his girl's clothes the instant he got home, preferably forever, but his mom and sister had other ideas! Nearly the instant he stepped in the door, they informed him that, since his dad was working late, they had planned a "girl's night" that evening — and he was invited. He tried to gently let them down, claiming to have a lot of homework to do, but they were having none of it.

"We want to celebrate your first week as Kelli!" his mom said. "And show our support. Come on, it'll be fun!"

Kenny knew he needed to set the record straight and tell them it was his first and only week as Kelli, that he'd thought it over and decided he wasn't really transgendered, and heck, not even gay, for that matter. But both of them were giving him puppy dog eyes, and he had never really felt this close to his mom and sister for a long time. Maybe one more night as a daughter slash little-sister couldn't hurt.

"Alright," he sighed. "Girl's night it is."

As it turned out, "girl's night" with mom and sis turned out to mean doing each others' nails (Sara persuaded him to try a glittery "amethyst purple") and applying facial masks before settling in to watch a sappy romance movie with a hunky male love interest. Of course, before doing any of that, they insisted they all change into their pajamas. Since Kenny didn't have any female pajamas, Sara generously lent him a very frilly pink nightie that swished distractingly around his smooth thighs. Kenny did his best to get into the spirit of things as they painted their nails, but the smell was obnoxious and the movie was quite

boring, in his male opinion. He was almost drifting off when the doorbell rang loudly!

"Who's that?" Kenny asked worriedly. "I thought dad was burning the midnight oil tonight, like he always says?"

"Oh, that must be the male stripper!" Sara exclaimed, clapping her hands in delight. Kenny's mouth fell open in horror, but to his surprise, both his mom and sister burst out laughing.

"She's kidding, dear," his mom said. "But we did order a pizza. Can you go get it? Your nails are the driest." She carefully fished a twenty dollar bill out of her purse and handed it over. "Don't worry," she said, noticing his reluctance. "It's not like anyone would recognize you with that facial mask on anyways!" Kenny supposed she was right, but it didn't mean he was any more thrilled about answering the door wearing a barely-there pink nightgown with his hair pulled back, green goop on his face, and glittery purple nail polish on his fingers and toes.

"Alright," Kenny said reluctantly. He supposed there was no way he could be recognized in this get-up, after all. "Be right back..." He took the money and swished to the door in his bare feet, tugging his nightie as far as possible down



his thighs before he opened it. To his utter shock, rather than a pizza boy standing there, it was...

"Principal Buckley?" Kenny gasped. "What are you... What are you doing here? At my house?"

"Hello, Kelli," Buckley said, showing no trace of embarrassment at seeing his pupil in a nightie. "I'm sorry to intrude on your family like this, but I felt I needed to speak with you as soon as possible. I was discussing the results of your interview with Miss Delfino, and she was, quite frankly, amazed."

"Amazed?" Kenny asked.

"You see, I didn't tell Miss Delfino it was a role-play exercise at all," Principal Buckley said. "I wanted to test my theory, and it seems I was correct. It was hard for her to believe you'd only been presenting as female for one week, and when she shared your answers to the interview questions, well, I was equally impressed. You were more than convincing. Uncannily convincing, in fact."

"Well, wasn't that what I was supposed to do?" Kenny asked, nervous under the principal's suspicious glare. "You know, to show I had learned about transgender issues and stuff?"

"But your answers showed a far deeper understanding than anything a typical teenaged boy might learn in a week of watching videos," Buckley said with a frown. "Your longing to be a girl seemed quite genuine, in fact, and your ad-libbing about desiring to have breasts... Well, it surprised me quite a bit." He took off his glasses, giving Kenny a penetrating stare. "The way I see it, you are far more interested in becoming a girl than you let on."

"But..." Kenny wanted to object, but saying he didn't want to be a girl probably wouldn't have been very convincing, dressed in the nightie. "But this is over, tight? Monday morning, we're back to normal."

"Monday morning? Oh, no." Buckley said. "As Ms. Delfino sees it, you *are* a transgendered student. She's already cleared all the paperwork and approved you as an officially transgendered student. You sure convinced her, and now that she's pointed it out to me, I have to agree. I *officially* welcome you to our school, Kelli."

"This is crazy!" Kenny said.

"Maybe the truth is that deep down, you really do want to be a girl. Perhaps your answers were so convincing, because you were speaking from the heart. In that case, I'd like to schedule you to see a therapist who specializes in gender issues."

"Kenny?" came his mom's voice. "Who are you talking to?" A second later, she was standing beside him in her pajamas, frowning. "Mr. Buckley?"

"Sorry to intrude, Mrs. Hart," Buckley said. "But I think you should hear this, too. May I step inside?"

Kenny followed his mom and school principal back inside, wondering just how tangled this web could get...



Rex Manning was uncharacteristically moody and tense after school on Friday, to the point that even his mother had noticed the change in her son. She suspected it had something to do with his love life — that supposed "homework buddy" of his, Kenny — but she wasn't likely to get any details from him than she would from a brick wall. She knew that high-school could be a stressful and confusing time — Lord knows she'd done her own fair share of experimenting in her youth — and she tried her best to be supportive and loving.

Rex, for his part, was too absorbed in his own worries to notice his single mother's efforts. He had held up his end of the deal, signing up for football. He'd already been practicing with the team for four days now. And in exchange, "Kelli" had turned out even better than he could have hoped. The first time he had walked into class in all his feminine glory, Rex had nearly popped a boner just looking at "her" — it had taken all his restraint not to ogle at every opportunity. And by the end of the week, he was even talking and moving like a real girl, too. Yes, seeing just how hot Kenny looked all dolled up as a chick, and how powerless he was to do anything about it, had been a huge turn-on, and made Rex even more sure of what he wanted: why chase girls and put up with their stupid female antics when he could make his own sexy little girlfriend from scratch? God help him, he was into transexuals. Especially super sexy ones like Kelli.

But now it was time for Buckley to come up with a way to ensure "Kelli" stuck around for good. After all, it was in both of their best interests — it wouldn't do for the transgender pupil to suddenly renege on his desire to be a girl. Every girl would scream in horror and every boy would recoil in regret. He knew Buckley was an expert manipulator, but he didn't know how he would manage to keep Kenny in skirts... Or at least, not until the doorbell rang on Saturday morning. Since his mom was already at work, Rex slouched reluctantly to the door, ready to bark at whoever it was to get lost.

However, when he opened the door, it was Kenny — or was it Kelli? — standing there nervously fidgeting. He was dressed in skinny jeans and a V-neck shirt, both from the boy's section, but he still had his long hair, pulled back in a high, feminine ponytail, and the nails of his hands, which he was twisting together nervously, were glittery purple. If Rex's eyes weren't mistaking him, he was even wearing a hint of makeup, with mascara accentuating his eyelashes, and a padded bra under his tight-fitting shirt, to boot! Seeing his confusion, Kenny blushed pink.

"I couldn't figure out how to get the hair extensions out, and my sister ran out of nail polish remover, so she thought I would attract less attention if I looked like a girl and did my makeup," he explained, embarrassed.

"I see," Rex said skeptically, raising his eyebrow. "Uh, what are you doing at my house on a Saturday morning?" Kenny grimaced in response.

"Things are getting totally out of hand," he said sadly, then quickly explained what had happened, and how Principal Buckley had arranged for him to have an appointment with a real therapist this very morning. "I'm on my way there now," Kenny explained. "And I was wondering if... If you could come with me. You know, since you're the only one who knows the truth about all this. So will you come?" he asked. "Maybe you can help explain to the therapist that this is all a big misunderstanding."

"Sure," Rex said, grinning as he realized what Buckley had done. "Let me grab my jacket."



When they arrived at the therapist's office, they were greeted by a stern, very intelligent-looking man wearing a white coat. "Good afternoon, Kelli, I'm Dr. Clippard," he said, shaking Kenny's hand. Then, before Kenny could correct him about his name, he turned to Rex. "And would you be her significant other?"

"Just a friend!" Kenny blurted. "Um, he came to help explain things."

"Well, that's very kind of him to offer you moral support," the therapist said. "But I'm afraid I need to have at least one session alone with you, first. I don't want any outside influences." Kenny sighed, looking to Rex, who only shrugged.

"Just tell him the truth," he suggested.

"I guess," Kenny said, looking nervous as a cat. Rex went to sit down and wait as Kenny disappeared into the office with the therapist. He couldn't help but wonder what was being said inside. Whatever it was, he could guess it wasn't going to be music to Kenny's ears, and later his suspicion was confirmed. When Kenny came out of the therapist's office an hour later, he looked close to tears, with an expression of both confusion and frustration.

"Well, how did it go?" Rex asked, feigning ignorance and concern. Kenny crossed his arms across his slender chest, lower lip trembling.

"He says I'm a textbook case," Kenny said, in nearly a whisper. "He... He said I'm in stage two denial, and the faster I accept that I'm a girl in a boy's body, the easier things will be. He even prescribed me female hormones!" He held up a small slip of paper with a doctor's signature at the bottom.

"Wow, that's crazy," Rex said wonderingly.

"You're telling me!" Kenny exclaimed, relieved. "I mean, what is he talking about? Naturally feminine my ass!" He flipped his hair out of his eyes, the girlish gesture totally at odds with his words.

"Although..." Rex said, trailing off.

"What?" Kenny asked worriedly.

"I mean, he is a professional," Rex said. "Don't you think he knows what he's talking about? At least, better than you do?"

"But I don't want to be a girl," Kenny said defiantly. "That's just it! I don't feel like I'm a girl deep down at all!"

"That's exactly what someone in stage two denial would say," Rex pointed out helpfully. "So he told you to take some pills? What else?"

"He says it would be in my best interests to finish the school year as a girl," Kenny sighed. "Since Principal Buckley is more willing than most administrators to accommodate me, he says I should take advantage of that while I can, and get some of my 'real life test' out of the way."

"Maybe it's one of those things where at first you don't like it, but it grows on you, and eventually you realize it was the right decision all along," Rex said thoughtfully, rubbing his chin. "You know, like me being friends with you."

"Ha!" Kenny exclaimed. "You said the 'f' word again! So we really are pals now!"

"Yeah, well," Rex grumbled. "I guess we are. So whatever you decide about this whole transgender thing, I'll be your buddy the whole way. I just think... Maybe you should try it."

"You mean, do what he says?" Kenny asked. "Be a girl for the rest of the year?"

"Yeah," Rex said. "If you show up as Kenny, you're going to get you ass kicked by every guy who ever got off dreaming about you and every girl is going to want to claw your eyes out for seeing them in vulnerable positions. I think you owe it to yourself to at least try and finish the year without pissing off every student in the school."

Kenny sighed, considering Rex's words. There were only a few months left in the school year. Would it really be so bad to keep being Kelli? Keep spending quality time with his mom and sister? Keep hanging out with the hottest and most popular girls in school, even if it was as one of them? And so long as he had one true masculine buddy who he could vent to whenever the girlish stuff got too crazy, then maybe he would be able to keep his sanity, too. After all, the therapist was a professional. He had to at least give the diagnosis lip service, even if it seemed patently ridiculous.

"Okay," Kenny said. "I'll try it. But I'm not making any promises... You know I'll just be back in pants by the end of the year, though."

"Fine by me," Rex said. "Although I think all the guys will miss staring at your legs."

"Shut up," Kenny grimaced.

"Just kidding around, pal," Rex grinned, seeing Kenny had taken the bait hook, line, and sinker. "Just kidding around."



So, that was what Kenny did: he went home and told his family that he was going to keep dressing as a girl, at least until the end of the year. That was the ultimatum he had decided on. Going back to being Kenny was riskier than staying as Kelli. As he might have guessed, his mom and sister were both excited to have another woman in the house, but he was surprised by how accepting his father was, saying that he would love him no matter what his gender was. It seemed like everybody was happy with his 'transition' except for him! Could it be that the therapist was right, and he was so deep in denial he couldn't even see it? No. He just didn't know what he was talking about. Determined to prove him wrong, Kenny decided the only thing to do was go 'all in' on his newfound girlhood, to show how wrong he was.

As such, whenever his mom and sister proclaimed it was a 'girl's night' and wanted to do each other's nails and watch sappy chick flicks, Kenny would grit his teeth and smilingly accept. Whenever the cheerleaders wanted to go shopping — which was often — Kenny would make himself go along with them, doing his best to ooh and aah over 'adorable' outfits and giggle over hunky salesmen. Even on his own, he did his best to learn new makeup techniques and read female magazines like Seventeen and Cosmo, hoping that the more feminine knowledge he absorbed, the sooner he'd reject it, and prove to his therapist that he was a real man, after all. The women in his life seemed all too delighted to have a new protégé, especially one who needed a new wardrobe built from the ground up, and Kenny was all too happy to hand over the reins when it came to clothes shopping. Unfortunately, for whatever was left of his male pride, they had picked up on his determination to be as feminine as possible, and that meant he soon found himself all decked out in the frilliest, laciest bras and panties imaginable, along with ruffled tops, see-through blouses, stretchy tank-tops, and the like, not to mention short flouncy skirts and high heels.

His therapist was delighted when he arrived at his next appointment, sashaying through the door in a tight pink top, cute denim miniskirt, and high-heeled wedge sandals with perfect hair and makeup to boot. It didn't seem to matter to the therapist that Kenny still hated every second of it, feeling like a total sissy every time he reapplied his lip gloss or wriggled into a tight little skirt designed to show off his smooth-shaven legs, every male instinct within him screaming that this was not right at all. Instead, the therapist said



this was a sign he was getting even closer to 'breaking through' his denial. His long-suppressed femininity was waging a war with his society-induced masculine identity...or something like that...and the only way out was forward, meaning he needed to be as girly as possible at all times.

The therapist also inquired about the pills, and Kenny admitted he'd been taking them dutifully every morning. He'd tried to 'forget' a few times, but his mother was having none of it, saying that he needed to follow the directions to the letter, even if they made him feel a little dizzy and light-headed afterwards. The therapist asked about him noticing any changes, and Kenny, blushing head to toe, admitted that his nipples had been swollen and itchy lately. The therapist seemed delighted at the news, and assured him the effects would soon start to accelerate. To aid the process, he doubled the dosage, handing Kenny a new prescription to take to the doctor.

A miserable Kenny did just that, while also doubling down on his efforts to be girly. He worked harder on his feminine voice, trying to move up an octave, and his mannerisms, too, flipping his hair, fluttering his nails, and cocking his head cutely when he spoke. On his therapist's orders, at home he even went so far as to redecorate his bedroom completely, getting rid of his old sports-related posters and replacing them with pop divas and hunky boy bands, clearing his old models off the nightstand to replace them with stuffed animals. It seemed like his efforts were paying off in one respect, at least — everyone at school had accepted him through and through as 'Kelli.' 'She' was even, dare he say it... Sort of popular?

Where the cool guys had once scorned him for his lame jokes, he now found he could say pretty much anything and have them hanging on his every word, especially on days when he wore a really tight top and had his makeup done in

a 'sultry' look. Where he had used to walk around with his head down like a lost puppy, his heels now forced him to adopt an upright, confident posture, swishing around in cute shoes that clicked loudly and turned heads. And during lunch, where he had once had to bounce from cafeteria table to cafeteria table, always an unwanted hanger-on, he now always had somewhere to sit, whether it was with the cheerleaders or with Rex and the jocks, who he'd finally warmed up to. He and Rex were no longer forced to act like they were dating, but some old habits died hard, and he found himself sometimes hugging him goodbye instinctively, or walking to and from class together. He was also the only one who knew how Kenny had gotten into this huge mess in the first place, and the only person he could go to when he felt frustrated by his 'progress' with the therapist and with girlhood in general. The official word around town was that they were 'on a break' while they both figured out their feelings, and that was fine by Kenny.

Or at least it was, until Jamal from the basketball team cornered him at his locker and asked him out on a date! Kenny was minding his own business, having just said goodbye to Stephanie and Brenda, when the tall black basketball player sauntered up nonchalantly.



"Hey, Kelli," he drawled. "What's up, girl?"

"Hi, Jamal," Kenny said, slightly surprised at the friendliness. "Um, nothing, really. I might go shopping with Stephanie later..." Jamal had been one of the least-friendly students back when this whole thing had started and Kenny had come to school dressed up like a flamboyant young gay man. Maybe the school's tolerant atmosphere had rubbed off on him.

Just in general, now that Kenny was dressing as a girl, a lot of the glares on the street had become admiring glances — uncomfortable in their own way, but much less frightening.

"You know, it's too bad you weren't all, uh, 'girlified' at the start of the year," Jamal said, grinning. "And hanging out with all the cheerleaders. I bet you coulda joined the squad, you know?"

"Oh..." Kenny said. He hadn't ever considered that possibility — imagine, him a cheerleader! But, as he reminded himself, 'Kelli' would no doubt love to be one. "Yes, it's too bad," he said. "I bet it would have been lots of, um, fun."

"Well, I know I woulda loved to see you shaking that tight little booty of yours at my games," Jamal said with a roguish wink. Kenny's lip-gloss-coated mouth fell open, and he blushed bright red. Oh, my God, he thought. Jamal is hitting on me!

"My... My... What?" Kenny spluttered.

"I swear you're looking finer every day, girl," Jamal grinned. "Man! You got a nice butt like a real girl now. If you don't mind my saying. When you wear those tight skirts..." He trailed off with an innocent shrug of his shoulders, leaning back casually against the locker. "So, what are you doing Friday night? How about you and me hang together?"

Kenny opened and closed his mouth like a confused fish, still too stunned for words. He instinctively put a hand over his bottom, as if he could shield it from everyone's eyes. He'd noticed his skirts and panties seemed tighter in the back, with his waist somehow slimming down even as he gained weight — and girlish curves — to his hips and butt. He knew it had to be the hormones taking effect, but he'd also managed to convince himself it wasn't visible to anyone else. Apparently he was wrong!

"I'm flattered," Kenny squeaked. "But, um, I... I don't think so."

"Why not?" Jamal asked, looking offended. With his prowess on the court, and supposedly in bed, not many girls ever turned him down. Kenny briefly considered trying to tell him the truth — that despite his ultra-girly exterior, he was still a guy deep down, and had zero interest in going on a date with another man — it made him queasy just thinking about it, in fact! But his therapist said he would develop a healthy interest in boys in due time, and besides, Jamal was likely to be offended by it. Kenny racked his brain for an excuse that would keep Jamal away for the rest of the year. Suddenly, it came to him.

"Well," he said nervously. "I'm actually seeing someone again..."



"You told him *what?*" Rex demanded, grinning incredulously.

"Keep your voice down!" Kenny wailed. They were walking to class the next day, and Kenny had just divulged what he'd told Jamal. "I wanted to get him to stop hitting on me," Kenny explained. "So I... Well, you heard me. I said you and I are dating again."

"Jeez, thanks for letting me know first," Rex said sourly. "What if I have a thing going with another chick?"

"Do you?" Kenny asked worriedly.

"No," Rex said, sounding slightly sheepish. "But that's not the point. I did my time. I'm not going to start acting all 'gay' again just to help you out." Since Buckley's program had officially ended, he had gone back to his old ripped jeans and black T's, and no longer wore his earring.

"But you wouldn't have to," Kenny said, blushing. "I mean, you could just act normal. I'll do all the acting. Please, Rex? Jamal was staring at me all morning!"

On the inside, of course, Rex was overjoyed. The last month and half had been radically stressful for Kenny, trying to come to grips with a professional diagnosis telling him he was a transgender teen in denial, but it hadn't been a cakewalk for Rex, either. Principal Buckley had advised him that things would take time, and in the meanwhile he needed to show restraint. Even though Rex often went to bed dreaming about 'Kelli,' he acted totally uninterested sexually during the day, instead listening patiently while Kenny whined about secretly hating his new life and the effects of the hormones, and how he just didn't see how he could really be transgendered, and how once the year was over he would go back to being a guy... Well, now here he was, practically begging for Rex to be his boyfriend!

"All right," Rex said, feigning reluctance. "I'll do it. But on my terms."

"What do you mean?" Kenny asked.

"I'm not gay, remember?" Rex said, stopping in the hallway and raising an eyebrow.

"I know that," Kenny said hastily. "Neither am I!"

"So I don't want any reminders that I'm out and about with another guy," Rex said sternly. "I think your therapist is right, and that deep down you're still fighting your femininity, and I'm not going to enable you anymore. From now on, when you're around me, you're Kelli, got it? Or the deal's off."

Kenny's mouth fell open. Up until now, Rex had been his sole confidante, the only person who really knew the whole story apart from Principal Buckley. If he couldn't talk about it with Rex, that only left his therapist, who didn't seem to believe a word he said anyways.

"Well?" Rex prodded. But maybe Rex was right, and he was still holding something back, even as he tried his best to be a girl... His therapist had been hinting lately that he needed to try spending more time around the opposite



sex — meaning his own sex, of course. Kenny shifted from foot to high-heeled foot in indecision. Then he caught sight of Jamal swaggering down the hallway. The handsome black boy gave him a lustful up-and-down look, followed by a wink. Kenny smiled back weakly and immediately grabbed Rex's arm.

"Okay," he said. "Your terms. Just... Just hold my hand, will you, please?"

Rex did better than that as Jamal approached, wrapping his strong arm around Kenny's slender waist and pulling him close enough to plant a firm, gentle kiss on his lips. Kenny's eyes widened in surprise, but, knowing he needed to look convincing to put Jamal off, he quickly let his eyes flutter shut and made a small noise of contentment. When he opened them, Jamal was heading off at warp speed, looking angry and hangdog.

"There," Rex said, wiping lip gloss off his mouth with an expression of distaste. "That should do the trick." His heart was racing with excitement, to say nothing of the lump growing in his jeans, but he used every ounce of willpower to look weirded out and regretful at having kissed another guy. In reality, 'Kelli's' soft, pouty wet lips were the most magical he'd ever tasted, and it was all he could do not to slam her up against the lockers and totally ravish her... But as Buckley said, he had to be patient to get what he wanted from people.

"Probably," Kenny agreed nervously, looking equally perturbed. "Gosh, we'll be late to class!" He put out his dainty, manicured hand and Rex took it, interlocking his fingers with his own, and then he instinctively let his newly-rekindled 'boyfriend' lead the way down the hall.



The news that Rex and Kenny, now 'Kelli,' were once again an item, spread quickly through the school. This time, however, there wasn't even a hint of scandal — after all, they looked like any other heterosexual teenaged couple when they held hands in the hallway. Everyone had fully accepted Kenny's new feminine identity, and he even overhead some jocks from the football team — guys who had once teased him or ignored him — congratulating Rex for 'locking down' such a 'hot little piece of skirt.' Kenny's quest to uncover his hidden longing to be a girl meant forcing himself to be as feminine as possible, so he had developed a reputation as quite the Barbie doll, always coming to school with full makeup, perfectly-styled hair, and more often than not a short, revealing skirt matched with sexy high heels. Most guys could only wish their girlfriends would take the same effort with their appearance each day! The therapist encouraged this behavior at every turn, and Rex subtly did the same, always complimenting him on his 'sexier' looks and encouraging him to always act as girlish as possible. Between his newly blossoming curves, pretty face, and tight, revealing outfits, it wasn't long before 'Kelli' was considered, by consensus, one of the hottest girls in school, even among the cheerleaders.



Kenny knew he should have been proud to hear boys complimenting his beauty, but instead he only felt ashamed and embarrassed. No matter how hard he tried, it still just felt wrong dressing this way and being stared at lustfully by other guys — he still had no

interest at all in men, even though he giggled along with the other girls as much as he could about cute boys. He was lucky Rex was there for him to play the 'boyfriend' role and keep the other guys away! Rex had wisely suggested that they really lay it on thick at school, meaning they walked everywhere together hand-in-hand, or with Rex's arm around his waist, sometimes resting dangerously close to his bottom. Every once in a while Rex's hand would 'accidentally' slip down and cop a feel, but Kenny knew it was just a joke between guys — after all, the big strong jocks on the football team were constantly slapping each others' butts. Rex had also told Kenny that they needed to kiss often enough not to attract suspicion, he had become used to quick pecks on the cheek, or occasionally mouth, that were enough to divert suspicion without actual canoodling. 'Kelli's' femininity seemed to have a mellowing effect on some of Rex's rough edges, too, meaning the torn jeans and Metallica T-shirts slowly turned into more fashionable fare, and they even double-dated with Stephanie and her quarterback boyfriend a few times at various expensive restaurants. They were widely considered one of the school's cutest couples, and as graduation drew near, they were even considered possible favorites for Prom King and Prom Queen!

Kenny wasn't aware he was in the lead for votes, being far too distracted by the accelerating effects of his hormone pills — his chest was getting puffy and his 'little soldier' didn't seem to get hard anymore. His therapist said it was a great development, but Kenny was more than a little stressed out by the changes. With so much going on in his mind, he was oblivious to the fact that he was a potential Prom Queen until a Channel 5 news van arrived at the school to interview him about it. A beautiful blonde news anchor Kenny had always had a bit of a crush on cornered him at his locker, accompanied by her camera-man, before he knew what hit him.

"Stand over here, honey, you look gorgeous by the way, love the pumps, okay, live in three, two, one..." the news anchor beamed. Kenny blinked like a deer in the headlights as she reeled off an introduction. "Kelli Hart is as pretty a prom queen as any, but there's something a little bit different about her," she said breathlessly. "You see, up until a few months ago, 'Kelli' went by 'Kenny!' One of thousands of transgender individuals who feel they are born into the wrong body, Kelli is now well on track to becoming the beautiful young lady she always felt she was on the inside. Kelli, what does it mean to you to be able to attend your prom in a luxurious evening gown instead of a tuxedo?"

Kenny glanced nervously at Rex, who was standing off-camera. He had barely given prom a second thought! Rex gave him an encouraging nod. "It's... awesome?" he squeaked.

"Someone's a little nervous," the news anchor chuckled, flipping her perfect blonde hair. "I see you keep looking over to this handsome young man for moral support. Why don't we get him in frame, too?" Without needing to be



told twice, Rex stepped up beside Kenny and wrapped his arm around him, flashing the camera a devil-may-care smile. Despite himself, Kenny immediately felt safer with Rex there to help him out. "Now, who is this handsome young man? A friend? Something more?"

"He's... This is my boyfriend, Rex," Kenny stammered. He flushed bright pink, realizing what he was saying was going to be seen by people everywhere on TV.

"My, my, quite the catch!" the news anchor said with a sly smile. "Rex, how proud are you of Kelli?"

"I really don't deserve her," Rex said. Kenny glanced over, puzzled, but Rex just gave him a big smile. "I mean, she's really turned me around. I was a new student here, and always getting into trouble — just angry at the world, I guess. But then I started hanging out with Kelli... Or I guess 'Kenny,' back then... And it gave me something better to focus on than being mad all the time. Kelli really inspired me to change. Seeing how much she's changed over this year is

unbelievable. I mean, look at her, she's gorgeous." Rex planted a kiss on Kenny's cheek, making him blush even brighter. "And I would never have passed English if it weren't for her nagging me all the time. Kelli's not just my girlfriend, she's my friend, and I think that's even more important." Kenny looked at Rex, wide-eyed. Was it true? Had he really been the one helping Rex all along? And if he gave up on being 'Kelli,' would that mean Rex would go back to his old bad ways?

"And for you, Kelli," the news anchor continued. "What kind of difference does it make, having a supportive boyfriend to help you through your transition?"

"It's been great," Kenny said firmly. "And going to prom together is... Like... A dream come true."

"And you certainly deserve it!" the news anchor beamed. "That's a wrap, folks. You two are adorable on camera together, really. Okay, pack it up, let's get going. We need some interviews with classmates..."

The news anchor and the camera-man hurried away, leaving Rex and Kenny standing together.

"Did you really mean all that stuff?" Kenny asked hesitantly.

"Absolutely," Rex said firmly. "I think what you're doing is really brave. You're finally starting to feel like a real girl, aren't you? I can tell." Kenny's mind was in turmoil. No, he still didn't feel like a girl at all! He still felt like a guy play-acting. But he'd had no idea how important seeing his 'transition' had been for Rex, and who knew how many other people, too. And now that he was going to be on TV as a transgender role model for other transgender teens...

"I think so," Kenny said tremulously. "I... Yes. I think my therapist is right."

"Good," Rex said, grinning. "So, do you wanna go to prom with me? I think everyone's going to kind of be expecting it now."

"Oh, my God," Kenny groaned. "I need to find a dress!"

"I'll take that as a yes," Rex quipped.



It seemed like everyone and their uncle saw the Channel 5 news story about Kenny's transition to 'Kelli,' and for a week or so Kenny was bombarded with messages by relatives either congratulating him on coming out, or a couple crazy ones warning him he was going to hell, along with messages from people he had never met who were inspired by his courage to run for prom queen... Never mind the fact that Kenny hadn't even put his name in. Before long it seemed pretty much a given that he would win, and that Rex would win Prom King — Stephanie was a little miffed about it, but the popular opinion was in

favor of 'Kelli,' especially since it would prove once and for all what a diverse, tolerant high school they attended.

Receiving fan mail was a new experience for Kenny, and he felt guilty and confused over the whole charade. Now he was a transgender role model, even though he himself wasn't sure he was even transgender... What if someone figured it out, and was angry with him for fooling everybody into thinking he was transgender? The only way to avoid that was to act as girlish as possible, as if he truly did want to be a perfect, feminine young lady. It seemed like everyone else had accepted 'Kelli,' so why couldn't he? His therapist kept suggesting he give it time, and wait for the hormones to take more of an effect on his body. Once his body was more feminine, he reasoned, he wouldn't be able to deny his natural girlhood any longer. It seemed totally backwards to Kenny, but he wasn't the expert. Maybe he was right, and with time Kenny would stop seeing a boy in the mirror and start seeing a young woman, but for now, Kenny still felt like he was playing pretend.

That thought was still fresh in his mind when he received an email from a familiar name: Delfino. The woman from the grant foundation, who had been the first, or maybe second after Principal Buckley, to suspect that Kenny was genuinely transgender. Oddly, the email address was from Principal Buckley's account, but he was sure that was just some kind of technical glitch. Kenny clicked it open with one long pink nail, curious despite himself to see what she had to say.

Dear Kelli,

First off, congratulations on your lovely interview! I saw it on Channel 5, and so did a friend of mine who works as a plastic surgeon. He brought you up in conversation, and I instantly remembered what you told me about filling out that perfect prom dress of yours! After a little bit of rescheduling, he's managed to clear an appointment for you to consult for breast implants — and the best part is, he wants to do it pro bono. It has to be this weekend, as that's the only time he has free. What do you think? I'm putting his office and phone number below.

Cordially,

Karen Delfino

Finishing reading the email, Kenny gulped. He wasn't quite sure what he'd just read, but two words leapt off the page: breast implants. Or, in layman's terms, a boob job! He was being offered a boob job... He got up from his computer desk and walked over to the full-length mirror in his room. Before the chime of a new email had distracted him, he'd been finishing getting ready for dinner and a movie with Rex and some of the popular kids, so naturally, he

was dressed to the nines. He had on a short, sexy black skirt in satin, paired with four-inch sling-back pumps and a frilly red backless halter-top that he'd bought while shopping with Stephanie. He cupped the padded cups of his bra with each hand and frowned, pouting his lips — which were bright glossy red to match the top, and in a shade Rex said looked really good on him — together in a frown. He also had plenty of silver bangles on his wrists and a pair of big silver hoop earrings that Rex had bought him as a present, so nobody would ask why they never bought each other things, amidst his long dark-brown hair.



He had been out almost every night in the past several days. Dancing, dinner, a real social life — better than anything he'd ever experienced as Kenny. It was so much more than he'd ever hoped. He wasn't just going out with the popular crowd. He was one of them, and he loved it. He never wanted the fun to stop.



The girl he saw in the mirror now, especially when dressed up, which was often, was the kind of high school hottie he had once dreamed about dating — a total doll. But if she was lacking in any department, it was the chest department.

Kenny shook his head, nearly laughing aloud. Not only was he being offered a boob job, he was actually considering it. While the hormones had given him a slightly

puffier chest that could be formed into a semblance of cleavage with some clever tricks and padding, he still relied on a stuffed bra with gel inserts at all times to give himself a realistic bust. Would he finally feel like a girl if he had boobs? Was his therapist right? It did make a kind of sense... It would definitely be harder to think of himself as a guy if he had a rack, after all! And the cheerleaders were always teasing him about being so flat-chested, and it really did get old...

As the doorbell rang, signaling Rex's arrival, Kenny put it out of his mind and went downstairs to meet his date. His family had already met Rex on several occasions, and were quite taken with him — it was almost scary how Rex could turn on the charm when he wanted to. As they drove to the restaurant, Kenny focused on slipping into his role as 'Kelli,' Rex's girlfriend. Throughout the evening he was careful, as always, to be as girly as possible, taking his cues from the other cheerleaders on when to giggle, flirt, or touch up his makeup. He gave Rex a thank-you kiss on the cheek when he opened the door like a gentleman, and in the theatre even laid his head against his 'boyfriend's' muscular chest as they snuggled together. Try as he might, it still felt like some big charade. He still hated the way his hips swished alluringly as he walked, and how his ankles ached from the high heels, and how Rex could casually steer him around by the waist as if he was just a sexy, smiling trophy to be shown off — it all made him feel so weak, so vulnerable, so... horribly feminine. But if he was meant to be a girl all along, why didn't he love his femininity? Maybe it really was time to take a drastic action...

"Rex," Kenny said timidly, as he was being escorted back to the car after the movie, his high heels clicking noisily on the parking lot surface. "I've been thinking about something my therapist mentioned..."

"What is it, babe?" Rex asked. Kenny grimaced. Rex knew he could lay off the pet names when they were alone together, but some habits died hard.

"What would you think if I got a boob job?" Kenny asked, blushing furiously. Rex's jaw dropped, but to his credit, he quickly recovered.

"Any particular reason?" he asked, trying not to grin in delight. Just the words had given him an instant stiffie — it was a good thing they were nearly to the car! Earlier that week, overjoyed that the team had won five games, making it the first non-losing season in 28 years for the Fighting Gamecocks. Overjoyed might have been an understatement. The man was floating in the clouds, a jolly laugh coming from him at every opportunity. The .500 season was largely thanks to Rex's play, and Buckley deliriously promised that he was going to give Rex a surprise bonus. Or as he had put it, "Two big bonuses." Rex had puzzled over what that meant, but now he knew. The only trick was that he couldn't appear too eager to accept the gifts, in the form of breasts for his so-called girlfriend.

Kenny, oblivious to Rex's triumph, explained about the offer of a pro bono cosmetic surgery thanks to Miss Delfino's connections. "So, should I do it?" Kenny asked. "My therapist thinks it would help, I know. It's just... It seems like such a big step, so permanent, when I'm still not sure I even..." He trailed off miserably, and Rex quickly stepped in.

"It is a big step," he said. "And you're ready for it. Nobody deserves this more than you do, and if for some reason you hate it, well, it's not like boob jobs are permanent. You can get the implants taken right out any time you want." Kenny nodded thoughtfully, weighing the pros and cons in his mind. He still had his year-long ultimatum in mind... If the year ended and he still hated being a girl, he could have the boobs taken out and go back to boyhood. But if it was the key to finally accepting his "hidden transgender nature" and stomping out his "masculine denial" once in for all, then maybe he could finally be as happy with 'Kelli' as everyone else was.

"Okay," he said. "I'll... I'll do it."

That sealed it, and a mere two days later, Kenny was wearing a hospital gown, sitting in a wheeled hospital bed, and holding Rex's hand. He knew the gesture was just for show — after all, it would look strange for a committed boyfriend not to show up for their girlfriend's surgery — but Kenny felt almost comforted by the familiar feeling of Rex holding his hand. His mom was there, too, having signed off on his surgery due to him being a minor, and both of them assured him he wouldn't feel a thing.

The nurse came to give him his anesthetic, and ten seconds later he was out like a light. A couple hours later, he woke up in recovery, feeling very strange. His mind was still dulled by the painkillers, so his mom took careful notes as the doctor explained how to care for his new breasts while they healed, such as by avoiding rigorous exercise and sleeping on his side so the stitches wouldn't leave any marks.

He and the surgeon had mutually agreed on a B-cup — definitely big enough to be noticeable, especially in a push-up bra, but not enough to stop traffic or anything. With all the swelling and layers of bandages, though, B cups felt absolutely gigantic! As he spent the next few days in bed recovering (Stephanie and the other girls had all sent him flowers and cards, which he admitted was quite heart-warming), it felt as though he had a pair of cantaloupes stuck to his chest. But they weren't just foreign objects — they were definitely part of him. He felt them move with every movement, sometimes painfully if he jerked around. Everything was still quite sore and tender, as the surgeon had warned.

Kenny spent his recovery time watching chick flicks with his sister and wondering if he'd made the right decision. He stumbled across a few old lingerie catalogues he'd stashed underneath his bed long, long ago, before any

of this stuff with Principal Buckley's pro-awareness program, or his suppressed transgender nature, or anything. Once he'd used them to fantasize and jerk off, but now as he looked at the catalogue he couldn't help but think how soon he would be wearing equally frilly, feminine contraptions to contain breasts of his very own! Far from being comforting, the thought was absolutely terrifying.

On the big day when the bandages came off, Kenny nearly fainted dead away. Fortunately, his mom and sister thought it was from happiness. He had tits! He knew they were still 'riding high' on his chest, and there was still a bit of swelling, but they seemed huge to his inexperienced eyes, twin globes of firm flesh topped with perky pink nipples thrusting proudly away from his formerly scrawny chest. It was utterly bizarre seeing his own face, made-up or not, above an honest-to-goodness décolletage, matching his dainty waist and widening hips. He was only distracted from his reflection by the ring of the doorbell.

"Oh, that'll be Rex," his mom said casually. "He wanted to come over to celebrate your big day — I think he brought you flowers."

"Well he could have called me first!" Kenny groaned. "I don't want him to see me like..." He trailed off, realizing there was no good reason a girl wouldn't want her boyfriend to see her with a beautiful new pair of perky B-cup breasts. Fortunately, his mother filled in the blank with her own feminine logic.

"I'll stall him for a few minutes while you fix your hair and put on a bit of makeup," she reassured him. "Don't worry, dear, his attention won't be on your face today..." She gave him a sly wink, which he did his best to return with a smile, then left. Kenny quickly worked his way back into the support bra he'd been given, and pulled a tight-fitting sweater overtop. It moulded tightly to his new curves in a far more realistic way than it ever had before.

"Kelli?" came Rex's voice at the door. "Can I come in?"

"Yeah," Kenny sighed in defeat, applying a bit of mascara on autopilot. "Come on in." Rex didn't need to be told twice, striding into the room with a big bunch of flowers and an expression that was a little too eager for Kenny's taste. Naturally, his eyes went straight to Kenny's new bust.

"Whoa!" he exclaimed. "Well, how do you feel?"

"Still a little sore," Kenny said, blushing.

"Can I see 'em?" Rex asked, with a casual grin as if he'd just asked about the weather or something else equally mundane.

"What?" Kenny spluttered. "No way!"

"Why not?" Rex prodded. "What's wrong with a girl showing her boyfriend her boobs? We've been dating for practically three months, I'd say that's more than long enough for some show-and-tell." He winked, to show he was joking, but Kenny still hurled a pillow at him in outrage.

"We're not actually dating, though!" he pointed out. "We're just friends."

"Well, if I had a nice set of boobs all of a sudden, I wouldn't begrudge a friend checking them out," Rex said matter-of-factly. "Come on, don't be such a prude about it."

"If it'll make you shut up," Kenny said, blushing again. He reluctantly peeled the sweater off, making his new breasts bob attractively. Even in the confines of a plain support bra rather than a sexier, more feminine design, Rex's eyes were immediately glued to his "girlfriend's" new cleavage. Kenny tried to feel proud of his feminine beauty — Rex was obviously impressed with it — but he only felt embarrassment over it. It felt so strange, so foreign, so... wrong. The two new signifiers of his femininity jiggled slightly with every move he made, constantly reminding him of their presence. What had he done to himself?

"Do you like them?" Rex asked, managing to tear his eyes away long enough to look Kenny in the eye.

"I... I don't know," Kenny said softly, feeling tears welling up in his eyes.

"You'll get used to them," Rex said kindly. "Don't worry."

As he left, Rex had a dreamy smile on his face as he imagined 'Kelli' in her first bikini a year from now, forced to show off her newly-feminized body to the lustful stares of horny guys on the beach, blushing as he helped her tie her skimpy top in a pretty little bow in the center of her back. It was such an arousing image that he had to reach down and slyly adjust himself to keep Kenny's mom from noticing his growing hard-on.



Despite Kenny's fears, Rex was right. Although the first week was awful — Kenny got a little jolt of horror every time he saw his boobs in the mirror, adjusted his bra strap and felt real flesh jiggling in response, or caught someone staring at his chest — eventually he got used to having breasts. He even adjusted to the fact that his newly-sensitive nipples (the hormones had done their work) stiffened noticeably if he wasn't careful in a cold room. The cheerleaders were thrilled that he had boobs like the rest of them now, and had fun bullying him into all kinds of low-cut tops to draw Rex's eye. Kenny had never realized how much power a nice pair of breasts had, especially paired with a pretty face and slender body. Guys were constantly staring at his cleavage whenever he wore anything even slightly provocative, and he got all kinds of special attention from waiters and sales clerks, too. He knew he should be enjoying his newfound power — a sort of 'rite of womanhood' — but instead he still wanted to crawl under a rock every time he noticed himself getting ogled. His dad, in particular, had a way of always holding a book in front of his face when Kenny wore something low-cut, in order to avoid any accidental boob-to-eye visual contact.



The prom came up quickly, and before he knew it, he was out dress shopping with Stephanie and Brenda. They managed to find him an incredible 'steal' of a deal on a pretty lavender number, though the price tag still made Kenny's eyes wide as dinner plates. It was an extremely feminine color with a long flowing skirt slit thigh-high on one side, a snug-fitting bodice, and a devastatingly low cut front designed to show maximum cleavage. Both cheerleaders agreed it was totally hot, and totally 'her,' as well. Knowing he was doing his duty to be 'Kelli' to the very best of his ability, he tried it on. Naturally, it fit his slender body type like a glove, and even Kenny had to admit he looked gorgeous in it.

"Your only problem will be keeping Rex from ripping it off you before prom's even over!" Stephanie giggled slyly. Kenny flushed, still spinning this way and that in front of the mirror, inspecting his reflection. The thin, silky fabric of the gown's skirt caressed his hairless legs as he twirled, giving him goose bumps, and the thigh-high slit promised to give tantalizing flashes of skin all night. The bodice, meanwhile, hugged his tiny waist so tightly he could barely breathe, though Brenda had assured him while zipping him up that it was meant to fit that way. It helped push his boobs up, and the low-cut strapless style showed them off to perfection. It felt strange to be wearing so much material, but at the same time, feel practically naked! Kenny looked at the mirror, marveling that the gorgeous girl there was really him. It was a girly dress, that was for sure, and a very sexy and revealing one, at that. Wouldn't a girl like Kelli want such a dress, especially on prom?

"Okay," he said finally. "I'll take it."



Even though the cheerleaders were counting down the days until prom, Kenny was still surprised when he woke up on the morning of the big dance and realized that in a matter of hours, he would be attending his own prom in a dress and heels. It was hard to believe. Of course, he hadn't counted on having boobs, either. He remembered how revealing his dress was and briefly considered trying to call in sick altogether, but that wouldn't do. It was prom, and much more, with all the media attention he had become more or less a shoo-in for Prom Queen. Even Stephanie had grudgingly voted for him!

Kenny went about his morning routine, bathing, shaving his legs, and blow-drying his hair, marveling at how different it was from the days of pulling on a T-shirt and jeans and heading out the door. He had made plans to go with Stephanie and Brenda to the salon to have their makeup done together, so that was one less thing to worry about. When they picked him up they were all but glowing with excitement, and Kenny did his best to match their enthusiasm. They both talked about their dates in very explicit terms, making it clear they were planning on going 'all the way' for prom night, and seemed to be assuming that Kenny would do the same with Rex. He blushed furiously, but didn't bother trying to dispel their suspicions — after all, he and Rex had been

'dating' for quite some time, so it made sense for them to assume they were sexually active together. He did his best to steer the conversation back towards the decorations, the music, and who was taking whom, but they were far more interested in who was 'doing' whom.

"I wonder if Rebecca is going to lose her virginity," Brenda giggled. "You know, Rebecca Smith?" Kenny did know her — she was the shyest of the cheerleaders, but still very pretty and nicer than most of them. She was the only cute girl who had ever acknowledged his existence back before his big 'coming out,' and he'd even fantasized about asking her out on a date once or twice.

"She's bringing some hunk from a different school," Stephanie chimed in. "It's funny, because she used to have, like, a big crush on you, Kelli. You know, as Kenny?"

"What?" Kenny gasped. "On me?"

"Yeah, it was so weird," Brenda agreed. "We told her you were a total nobody — no offense, girlfriend, that was before we knew how awesome you are — but she totally thought you looked like this cute guy from a boy-band she was crazy about. I think she probably wished you were going to ask her to prom! Can you even imagine?" Kenny swallowed, suddenly feeling faint. In some alternate dimension, he was wearing a tux and taking a cheerleader to prom, but instead...

"She was crushed when you came out of the closet," Stephanie continued. "Terrible gay-dar, right? And now... Well, let's face it, you look hotter in a dress than she does! Isn't that funny?"

"Yeah," Kenny said weakly. "That's so funny. I'm so glad I'm... Going with Rex, instead."

"You don't have to tell us, girl," Brenda said, with a hint of old jealousness. "You two are gaga for each other, and I don't blame you. He's a stud."

When the hair and makeup appointment finally ended, Kenny returned home, doing his best to put the revelation out of his mind. He was Kelli now, and he should be happy to be going to prom in a gorgeous dress with a handsome date. Instead he focused on getting ready, painting his finger and toe nails with a glittery pink polish to match his gown, picking out his lingerie, and finding the jewelry he'd chosen to accessorize his dress. His mom was only too happy to help — a few months ago it would have seemed totally bizarro to have her in his room while he scurried around getting ready for prom, clad only in a pair of frilly pink panties and a matching peignoir, but Kenny had to admit he was a lot closer to both his mom and his sister as 'Kelli' than he'd ever been as a guy. By the time she zipped him up, she had tears of happiness in her eyes.

"Oh, honey, you look beautiful," she said. "Like a princess!" Kenny took a deep breath, or as deep as he could manage in the tight-fitting bodice, and

turned slowly to look at the mirror. What he saw nearly took his breath away. The brunette beauty in the mirror, clad in an incredibly gorgeous, sexy pink gown, was the most perfect vision of femininity he had ever seen in his life, from her painted toe-nails to perfectly-coiffed hair. He raised one pink-clawed finger to toy with the chandelier earring half-caught in her...in his...hair. Kenny would have killed to take a girl like this one to prom, but now, from the perky B-cup breasts jiggling his underwire bodice, to the silky smooth legs flashing enticingly from the slit of his gown, he *was* that girl. So why couldn't he feel like her on the inside? The doorbell rang, pulling him from his thoughts.

"That will be Rex," his mother said. "Oh, he is going to just adore you."

"Yeah," Kenny smiled weakly. "I... I hope he does."



On the drive over to the school, Kenny noticed clearly that Rex couldn't stop glancing over at him, especially at the long, sexy leg exposed by the dress's slit, and at his bobbing breasts, which jiggled slightly every time they hit a bump. Kenny couldn't really blame him — after all, he would have ogled any girl in such a revealing dress, especially one as sexy as "Kelli" — but it still made him feel squeamish and embarrassed. He did his best to ignore it, focusing instead on retouching his lip gloss. A few moments later, they pulled up to the school, the entrance of which had been decorated extensively with balloons and banners for prom night.

"Shall we?" Rex grinned teasingly. He opened Kenny's door for him and offered an arm, something to which Kenny had grown quite accustomed. He took it with a smile, trying to get into the spirit of the evening. It was prom, after all, every little girl's dream. He should be loving it! As soon as Kenny entered the gym, he was greeted by Stephanie and Brenda and the other cheerleaders, including Rebecca, who Kenny exchanged air kisses with wistfully. Seeing how gorgeous she looked in her powder blue gown was almost painful, knowing he could have dated her... But shouldn't he be happier with Rex, anyways? He was a girl on the inside, after all. Kenny put it out of his mind as he exchanged compliments with the other girls and oohed and aahed over each other's dresses and makeup. They didn't have long to wait before their boyfriends all grew tired of the 'girl talk' and started pulling them, one by one, onto the dance floor.

"Don't step on my feet," Kenny ordered in a low voice, but he needn't have worried. Rex had obviously been brushing up on his dancing, just as Kenny had — he'd gotten his sister to give him tips. He wasn't the most graceful girl on the dance floor, but he was far from the worst. It helped that he had more practice in high heels than most real girls his age. Some of the poor girls looked like it was their first time on stilettos!

As the fourth or fifth song ended, Rex suggested they get a drink, and Kenny, eager for a break, eagerly agreed. He had lost sight of Brenda and Stephanie, but when Rex led him toward the punch table, he saw both them and their boyfriends hanging around the back door of the gymnasium. Kenny went to stop at the punch table, but Rex tugged him right past, making him stumble slightly on his stilettos and clutch Rex's muscular arm for balance.

"I thought we were getting a drink?" Kenny asked breathlessly, still flushed from dancing.

"Oh, we are," Rex grinned. They joined Stephanie and Brenda, along with their boyfriends Martin and Jeff, the quarterback. All of them had sly looks on their faces and the girls were giggling in delight. Kenny was totally confused, until the chaperone guarding the back door stepped aside with a knowing wink to the school quarterback. The two popular couples quickly hurried through the door, and Kenny, with a worried glance over his shoulder at the dance floor, let Rex lead him on. Once they were safely in the hallway, Rex took the lead, confidently directing them into the boy's locker room.

"Rex, are you sure we should be...?" Kenny whispered nervously.

"Oh, Kelli, don't be such a goodie-goodie," Stephanie chided playfully. "It's fine!" Kenny did his best to smile along with everyone else, adjusting his dress's bodice nervously, as Rex rummaged in a locker and came out with a bottle of what could only be powerful liquor.

"Ladies first," he said gallantly, handing Brenda the bottle. She giggled.

"Once a bad boy, always a bad boy," she said in wonder, shaking her head, then quickly gulped from the bottle, handing it to Kenny next. Kenny clutched it weakly in his glittery pink nails, knowing exactly how much trouble they could get into for drinking liquor at school! But Rex said he used to do this all the time, and he wouldn't let anything happen to him, would he? Reluctantly, he went to take a small sip, but Rex, under the guise of helping him hold the bottle, tipped it back to ensure Kenny got a large gulp of the alcohol.

"Ugh, Rex!" Kenny squealed. "It tastes awful!"

"Well, we aren't drinking it for the taste," Stephanie giggled, accepting the bottle next. As awful as it tasted, Kenny had to admit that it gave him a pleasant warmth in his tummy, and even made him feel a little light-headed, but in a good way, especially as the bottle came around to him again. He had to admit that he felt... Cool. He had finally done it. It was prom night, and yes, he was wearing a sexy dress and heels instead of a tux, but he was hanging out with the very coolest kids in school, being total rebels and drinking in the locker room! Kenny had always been a light-weight, and had never been popular enough to practice drinking very often, so before long the liquor went straight to his head. He was giggling along with the other girls and even let Stephanie, who was thinking of getting a boob job herself, squeeze and fondle his new breasts

through the flimsy fabric of his dress. Rex and the guys watched with no small delight, but Kenny was too tipsy to notice their lustful expressions. He did notice when Rex began stroking his thigh through the sexy slit of his prom dress, but he reasoned it was just for show — the other couples were getting quite frisky, so it would seem strange for them not to — and he decided to ignore it.

"Hey, where did Brenda and Martin go?" he asked, puzzled, a moment later. In his inebriation, he hadn't noticed them slip away.

"They went to go get a little privacy," Rex said casually. "And you know, I think we should give Stephanie and Jeff some, too." He pointed, and Kenny realized that the cheerleader and her quarterback boyfriend were now making out vigorously.

"Oh, good idea," Kenny said awkwardly. He couldn't help but watch as Jeff peeled down Stephanie's dress, remembering how he'd used to fantasize about doing the same to her or the other pretty cheerleaders... But now he was in a dress just as pretty as theirs. He wobbled dangerously on his high heels as he stood up shakily, clinging to Rex for support. Rex was only too happy to oblige, wrapping his arm around his date's dainty waist and escorting her out of the locker room. Kenny assumed they were heading back to the dance, but then realized Rex was leading him the wrong way down the hallway.

"Rex, shouldn't we go back?" he asked tremulously. Coming from Kenny, the protest might have annoyed Rex, but from "Kelli's" pretty, pouty lips, it almost turned him on... She was the sweet, nervous good girl who needed a guy like him to protect her. Rex grinned as he opened the door of an abandoned classroom and led his date inside. Kenny recognized the out-of-use classroom immediately — the faint marks of scrubbed-away graffiti could still be seen on the wall!

"We were such bad boys, weren't we?" Rex asked teasingly. "Of course, you're not a bad boy anymore... Maybe more of a bad girl?" Kenny felt Rex's strong hands encircle his waist from behind, then twirl him gently so they were face to face, with Rex's hands resting on his hips.

"Rex?" Kenny asked nervously. "What are you..." But he was cut off immediately by a kiss, and this was no fake "stage" kiss either — this was a real face-sucking kiss, with Rex's warm tongue thrust between Kenny's parted, painted lips, swirling around in his mouth. Kenny felt instant revulsion, pulling away and wiping his mouth, nearly gagging at the sensation of another guy French kissing him thoroughly. "What was that?" he squealed angrily. But rather than look apologetic, or explain how the alcohol had befuddled his judgment, Rex looked equally angry.

"Do you have any idea how shitty this 'deal' has been for me?" he demanded. "I'm a guy, Kelli! I have needs! Everyone thinks I'm dating the hottest girl in

school, and here I can't even get a lousy kiss on freaking Prom Night!"

"I'm not really a..." Kenny trailed off, blushing.

"Go ahead," Rex said bitterly. "Say it! You're still in denial, aren't you? Still denying that you're a girl when it's so obvious to everyone else that this was who you were meant to be all along. You're only hurting yourself more, Kelli — and the people who care about you."



"I am a girl!" Kenny blustered, confused. "I mean... It's just... I don't like..." He looked down at the floor, swishing the folds of his sexy pink gown. "I still don't like guys," he whispered.

"Yeah, right," Rex said angrily. "More like you won't even give yourself a chance to find out, because you're still pretending that under all the skirts and makeup and lingerie, you're some little macho man. You're too scared and too selfish to let yourself really be Kelli, one hundred percent. You're still holding back." Kenny's poor head was spinning from both Rex's words and from the alcohol. Was Rex right? Was he in denial over this, too? Had he shoved away Rex's kiss because he didn't like guys, or because he was scared to give up the last tiny vestige of his masculinity? "I'm done with this," Rex said, in a sickened voice. "I'm not going to keep enabling you to deny your real self, and I don't

know if I can even be friends with someone who's too proud to accept help." He strode away in disgust, leaving Kenny perched daintily on his high heels, trembling in confusion and anguish. Was he really losing Rex's hard-won friendship just like that? Kenny hugged himself in misery, blinking back tears, already picturing the humiliating walk back to the gym, all by himself, his heels clicking noisily in the empty hallway and his tears totally ruining his makeup. Everyone would see how drunk he was, and know that he and Rex had fought. He felt so small, so vulnerable...

"R-Rex!" he called pitifully. "Please, don't go! I... I..." Rex turned around with a weary expression of questioning. "I'd like you to kiss me again," he said, in a voice barely above a whisper, his cheeks flushed pink with shame.

"What?" Rex asked incredulously.

"Please kiss me again," Kenny begged. "Maybe you're right, and I just need to... To try..." He took a deep breath, nervously smoothing the fabric of his dress, as Rex drew close again.

"Alright," Rex said. "Just one." Kenny nodded weakly, preparing himself. He licked his glossy pink lips to moisten them, then titled his head upward submissively as Rex cupped his cheek. As their lips met, and Rex's tongue probed gently inside his mouth, Kenny tried desperately to pretend he was kissing a girl — but the masculine scent of Rex's cologne, and the stubble of his chin, made it all too obvious that he was locking lips with a guy. Willing himself not to be ill, Kenny let his eyelashes flutter and gave a small moan of what he hoped sounded like pleasure. When Rex finally pulled away, Kenny was flushed and breathless. "Well?" Rex asked. "Was it better?"

Kenny nodded meekly, not trusting himself to lie. He didn't want to upset Rex again, and he definitely didn't want to endanger their friendship. He trembled slightly as Rex looked him up and down with pure lust, drinking in the sight of him from head to toe. "Oh, Kelli," he said huskily. "You look so beautiful tonight."

"Th-thanks," Kenny stammered, wondering just how much Rex himself had had to drink. "You're... Really handsome, Rex." It was true — that was one of the reasons he'd wanted to be Rex's friend in the first place. Rex was big, strong, good-looking, confident — everything Kenny had always wanted to be. He'd hoped it might rub off somehow, but now... Before Kenny could finish the thought, Rex pulled him close and began caressing his breasts through the flimsy fabric of his prom dress. To his abject humiliation, he could feel his sensitive nipples responding to the groping.

"You're getting turned on by a guy touching your breasts," Rex breathed. "Are you sure you don't like guys?" Kenny blushed. His nipples were stiffening and aching, it was true, but anyone's touch would have elicited the same response... wouldn't it? He tried desperately to remember if they had been this hard when

Stephanie had cupped his boobs. Unsure of how to get Rex to stop without making a scene, Kenny let himself be fondled and caressed as Rex maneuvered him backward, pushing him up against the wall with a powerful kiss. It felt so wrong, but what could he do? Where could he go? He was a girl being kissed by her hunky boyfriend on prom night — shouldn't this be his dream? *Be Kelli,* he screamed at his own mind. *Be Kelli!*

"You're so strong, Rex," Kenny whimpered, trying to sound breathy and coy. "Your muscles are... Are so much bigger than mine."

"That's not all," Rex said with a wink, but before Kenny could even process the double-entendre he found his buttocks being groped through the slit of his dress, Rex's hand sliding up to grip a handful of his pantied bottom. "You wanted it as badly as I did this whole time, didn't you?" Rex breathed. "Wow! Imagine all that time we wasted pretending to be boyfriend and girlfriend when we could have actually..." He trailed off with a delighted grin. "No wonder you were always strutting around in those tiny skirts and wiggling your ass for me. You like the attention, don't you? You were driving me crazy on purpose, you little fox." Kenny smiled weakly and gave his hips a little shake, trying to be flirtatious. Rex leaned in and kissed him again. Kenny wrapped his arms around his neck how a good girlfriend should and did his best to kiss back with equal passion. Be Kelli, he repeated mentally. Be Kelli... Any second now, this would feel right. He would feel right. I just have to keep going...

"You can keep going," Rex said, with a grin. Kenny jumped, realizing he had spoken aloud and Rex had heard him. Rex reached down with one hand and unzipped his fly. Kenny gulped.

"Rex, I didn't mean..." Kenny trailed off. "I don't know if I can..." Rex gently took his hands in his.

"Kelli, you don't have to do anything you don't want to," he said. "But I care about you a lot, and I want tonight to be something special, and I really, really think, that deep, deep down...you want to." Kenny looked at Rex's engorged member as it flopped out of his boxer shorts, already coming to attention. He felt close to hyperventilating in panic. He had never looked at another guy's naked equipment like this, and never with the prospect of actually... Kenny licked his dry lips in nervousness, but Rex took it another way entirely, and gently pushed Kenny down to his knees. It was time to put up or shut up, Kenny thought. Everyone agreed he was a girl on the inside, and he was well on his way to being a girl on the outside, as well. A cute girl, a sexy girl. He was showing off his boobs in a low-cut dress, for God's sake. And everyone agreed that Rex was handsome. Everyone agreed they made a great couple.

Kenny slowly reached forward with a trembling hand, guiding the tip of Rex's warm, throbbing manhood between his pouty pink lips. *Be Kelli...*

Half an hour later, all cleaned up and back inside the gymnasium with nobody the wiser — aside from a few sly winks from the other couples who had been getting up to their own mischief — Rex and Kenny were on the dance floor again, slowly revolving to a slow, sappy song. Overwhelmed by the events of the past hour, never mind the past several months, Kenny laid his pretty head against Rex's muscular chest and let himself be spun around the dance floor. It all felt so unreal, like some bizarre dream he would soon wake up from. How had he gone from Rex's would-be lackey to his devoted girlfriend? How was he attending his own prom in a gorgeous gown and stiletto heels? And what he'd just done in the empty classroom with Rex... Kenny tried to suppress his shudder.

After he'd finished sucking him off, Rex had just held him for a long time, cuddling him and whispering to him about how beautiful he was, and how much Rex cared about him. He'd said that he had been going down a very dark path before they had started "dating", and that if it weren't for his new girlfriend, he might have done some very bad things, ended up in jail, on the run, or even dead. He'd said that "Kelli" had practically saved his life, and even worse... He said he loved her! Kenny had listened to all of it in a state of shock. If being Rex's girl had really saved his friend from getting mixed up in crime or even committing suicide, then how could be possibly go back to being Kenny without running the risk of Rex completely falling apart? And Rex was already talking about attending the same college together as boyfriend and girlfriend. It was all so overwhelming...

Rex, enjoying the sensation of Kenny's soft body pressed against him, and cherishing the memory of the hottest blowjob he'd ever received, had never felt more elated in his life. He was certain that the transformation of Kenny into Kelli, his dream girl, was complete. All the months of effort, of sly manipulations and psychological trickery, had been worth it. How could Kelli ever think of herself as a boy again after willingly giving her boyfriend a blowjob while wearing a sexy pink prom dress? While he fondled her luscious breasts? While he cooed to her that would stay by her side and protect her forever?

Of course, he couldn't have done any of it without Principal Buckley. He had orchestrated everything to perfection, instructing 'Ms. Delfino' to take Kenny's knowledge of the transexual lifestyle and then turn it around on him and make it sound like he harbored a secret desire to be one. With that in mind, Buckley had approved 'Ms. Delfino's' recommendation to a visit with an actual counselor. What Kenny couldn't have known, however, was that the counselor was being regularly paid under the table to diagnose him as a transgendered teen still going through the last little stage of denial before embracing femininity. With a professional telling him he was meant to be a girl all along, and Rex, his most trusted friend, guiding him gently but firmly in the same

direction, it wasn't long before Kenny caved in, as he always did, and simply went with the flow.

Rex remembered how excited he'd been when Principal Buckley had explained that the counselor would likely prescribe hormone treatment. Testosterone blockers would halt Kenny's male puberty before it could really take off, ensuring he would never get a growth spurt or become strong and muscular, keeping him small and dainty forever, while powerful estrogen pills would take him in the opposite direction, giving him girlish hips, soft skin, shiny hair and even budding breasts. All of that had happened, and when Buckley's fondest dreams of winning more than two games in a season came true, he once again used the name of 'Ms. Delfino' to send a few simple tokens of his deep, heart-felt appreciation – directly to Kenny's chest.

Rex looked down at his dance partner, enjoying the view of a pair of real, firm, nicely-rounded tits cupped by the underwire support of her dress, rather than the illusion of cleavage previously created by padding and tape. He'd met Kelli's sister and she was a looker, but quite flat-chested, meaning the hormones probably wouldn't increase their size any more than the B-cup. But C-cups would be even sexier... and since Kelli had already had one boob job, would she really complain about another? Yes, he had big plans for him and Kelli, and crazily enough, he really did have Principal Buckley to thank for the whole thing. He peered around for the middle-aged principal, and gave him a sly wave when he caught sight of him by the stage. Principal Buckley returned it, grudgingly.

As Rex's eyes returned to his soon-to-be-permanent 'girlfriend,' Principal Buckley gave the happy couple a shrewd look. All in all, things had worked out even better than he could have hoped where 'Kelli' was concerned. He'd saved his family name from of the scorn and ridicule of another pointless football season, and all it cost him was a few thousand dollars and some curly fries. But even so, he still felt a slight sense of unease. Principal Buckley had never considered himself a moral man, but pulling the strings to keep Kenny's transformation on schedule, and then watching Rex's downright diabolical manipulation of the young man, had made even him uncomfortable at times. Kenny may have blossomed into a gorgeous young lady, but Rex had blossomed into a true master manipulator, one to put even Buckley's skills to the test. That young man was going to go far, but Buckley didn't envy any caught in his path, his new girlfriend 'Kelli' included. He almost regretted the results envelope currently clutched in his hands — he had a feeling it might be the final nail in the coffin, so to speak, on Kenny's old life.

All the same, he couldn't afford to waste time worrying about two students who were now, effectively, alumni. He had a retirement gala to think of. Buckley was always two steps ahead — that was what being a principal was all about, after all.

Nodding with satisfaction at the thought, Buckley grabbed the microphone, cleared his throat, and prepared to announce the contents of his envelope: Rex Manning as Prom King and, as his high school's first ever transsexual Prom Queen, Kelli Hart. Though if Rex was as good as Buckley suspected, she wouldn't have her own last name for long...



Epilogue

Rex Manning looked at his reflection in the mirror and gave a self-satisfied smile. The ten years since graduation had certainly treated him well — he was still in good shape, tall and muscular, but he had long since swapped his torn jeans and black T-shirts for sharp, snazzy business suits. He had straightened out his act after high-school, realizing that he wasn't doing his future any favors by acting the part of a rebel all the time, and after studying business in university he had quickly found a job in finance. He was now a rising executive, making use of his domineering personality and devil-may-care charisma to climb the corporate ladder. At the tender age of twenty-eight, he already had a beautiful upscale condo, an expensive company car, a massive plasma screen television, and all the toys he could handle.

His absolute favorite plaything, however, was currently all dolled up in an incredibly tight, sexy bandage-style mini-dress and matching stiletto heels, fidgeting anxiously in front of the full-length bedroom mirror. After all, every rising executive needed a hot little trophy wife to parade around on his arm, and in Kelli, Rex had that in spades. Even now, he couldn't help but pause in the doorway, leaning against it with his arms akimbo, grinning as he observed his handiwork. The brunette beauty was still preening nervously, shifting her weight from foot to foot, both of which were encased in flimsy designer shoes boasting a five-inch spike heel.

The days of Kelli tripping along clumsily on her first pair of heels were long, long gone — Rex had taken great delight in slowly phasing out any shoes in his girlfriend's closet that didn't have at least a three inch heel, explaining calmly that it would help her feel more feminine and assuage her lingering doubts about whether or not she was really transgendered. Kelli didn't get to walk anywhere anymore — she could only mince, swish, and flounce, taking dainty heel-toe steps like a fashion model and ensuring a seductive, feminine swivel to her hips and yoga-toned buttocks. There was little Rex enjoyed more than seeing her wiggle around in high heels and tight skirts.

Rex let his eyes travel lustfully up the length of her long, slender, permanently denuded legs, enjoying the sight of her smooth knees rubbing together anxiously as she shifted position — it was hard to blame her, as the ultra-revealing mini-dress he'd bought her barely reached mid-thigh and clung to her hormone-widened hips like a second skin. Once she would have had to shave those gorgeous legs in preparation for a night out, but Kelli had complained one too many times about the new womanly hassle of daily hair removal, giving Rex the perfect excuse to have her undergo full-body electrolysis as a birthday present. Now she was permanently sexy-smooth all over, including her poor little tucked away manhood. It didn't do much anymore, thanks to the years of estrogen injections, but Kelli was still too

scared to get the final surgery, and Rex, for reasons of his own, didn't pressure her.

Rex grinned as he watched he watched her adjust her boobs in the mirror with a worried pout as she realized there was no way to avoid the dress's built-in underwire mashing them together into an enticing valley of firm, nicely-tanned cleavage, put on full display by the daringly low V-neck of the dress and looking even larger than their 36 C-cup size. Her tits were without a doubt one of her best features, and they hadn't come cheap. They topped a perfect hour-glass figure with a dainty little waist and femininely-curved hips without an ounce of extra fat on them. Rex had made it clear that just because he was the bread-winner of the two of them, it didn't mean Kelli wasn't expected to work — she spent nearly all her time at the gym to keep herself supermodel-slender and toned, and the rest of the week dieting, tanning, having her hair and nails done at the salon, and purchasing sexy outfits to entice her hubby. The amount of pocket money she had to spend was directly correlated to her being able to keep the pounds off, and not just that, Rex also managed to drop just enough sly hints about the attractive younger women at work to ensure that Kelli was totally obsessed with maintaining her figure — and Rex's interest. The results spoke for themselves — she was a perfect ten in the body department by anyone's standards, and Rex loved making her show it off.

"Ready to go, honey?" Rex asked loudly from the doorway.

Kelli pirouetted as gracefully as a ballerina in her stilt heels, making her perfectly-coiffed hair bounce around her shoulders. It was still the same shade of dark brown as it had been in high-school — Rex had teased her about bleaching it blonde, to really complete the "Barbie" look, but she had pleaded that it would make her look like some kind of bimbo, and besides, Rex had always preferred brunettes. Kelli had spent ages seated at her vanity to style it into sexy tousled waves that framed her perfectly made-up face — make-up she'd done just how Rex liked it, with seductive, smoky eyes and a bright pink gloss that called attention to her pouty collagen-enhanced lips.

"I'm just not sure about this dress," Kelli said softly, fluttering her coal black eyelash extensions how she'd learned to do instinctively when asking for favors. "I mean, I think maybe it's more of, um, a club dress? It's sort of revealing..."

"I paid a fortune for that dress because I thought you'd like it," Rex said, sounding hurt and disappointed. "Most wives would love to get a present like that from their husband. But if you hate it that much, go get changed."

"I don't hate it!" Kelli squealed. "It's beautiful, I just..." She cupped her perfect breasts with a distraught expression. "It's really low-cut?"

"Oh, honey," Rex said sympathetically. "This is what your therapist keeps talking about. You can't keep being ashamed of your sexuality, Kelli. You're a beautiful woman now, and men are going to stare no matter what. You have to

own it, remember?" He wrapped his muscular arms around her dainty waist, nuzzling her neck playfully. "Besides," he said huskily, squeezing her breast. "I paid good money for these, too, remember? It wouldn't kill you to show them off once in a while, especially for the people who still remember you as a scrawny little loser named Kenny."

Kelli blushed furiously. "Don't say that, Rex," she whined.

"Sorry, honey," Rex said. "I just can't wait to show everyone what a bombshell you turned out to be. I bet nobody else looks this good for their ten-year reunion. Definitely not if they've had kids!" That subtle remark, reminding Kelli once again that she wasn't able to give Rex children like another wife might have, was the final piece of the puzzle in his expert manipulation.

"I'm guess I'm being silly," Kelli said, wrapping her arms submissively around her husband's neck and giving him a peck on the cheek. "Thank you for the amazing dress, sweetie. I'm just nervous because it's been so long since I've seen everyone from school."

"It certainly has," Rex said, giving his wife a comforting pat on the tush. "I wonder if old Principal Buckley is still around. You know, if it weren't for him catching us with that spray-paint, we might have never ended up together. Can you even imagine how different things might have been?"



Kelli Manning swallowed, looking at her sexy, feminine reflection in the mirror, and Rex could tell she was thinking of the life she might have lived as a guy: going to prom in a tux instead of a dress, heading off to college, getting a career of his own, a girlfriend, maybe even a beautiful wife...

"We should make sure to thank him," Rex said. "Right, honey?"

"Oh, yes," Kelli said, with just a slight hint of sadness in her voice. "We really should."

Satisfied, Rex put his arm out and gestured towards the door. She took one last look at herself in the mirror, perhaps searching for some trace of the young man she had once been all those years ago. Then she gave a little sigh and draped her arm over his, letting him escort her out to the waiting car. If someone had told her that five minutes with spray-paint would lead to a lifetime of hairspray ... not to mention makeup, dresses, and luxurious lingerie ... she never would have believed them. But now she was Rex's partner for life, not just his partner in crime, and all she could do was make the best of it... Right?

The End

Titles by Sick Puppy Press

Sick Puppy Comics

Making Friends

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Three college students sign up for a six-month isolation experiment. Things start to get a a little strange, and they begin to lose their masculinity day by day. Yet, they don't seem to even notice... Full Color Comic Book / 38 pages

The Pet Sitter

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Asked to look after a supermodel's pet for a while, James finds himself thrust out of his own apartment and into hers. Day by day, it seems like circumstances adapt James to become the resident of a supermodel's lifestyle. Full Color Comic Book / 29 pages

A Curious Curse

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. When teen goth Brandyn gets his drivers' license, he thinks it's a ticket to adulthood. Unfortunately, he's already cashed a ticket in the opposite direction. Full Color Comic Book / 27 pages

Boys Will Be Girls

Story & Art by Fraylim, Script by KK, Ink & Color by Joe Six-Pack. The "Summer Blossom" camp welcomes anew group of young men. But although it may be an all-boys camp when they arrive, it's girls-only when they leave. Full Color Comic Book / 100 pages

Teens Transformed

She Made Me Into My Sister

"A Little Too Clever" by Joe Six-Pack. Wyatt wanted to help his girlfriend get revenge, but at what cost? As it turns out, a cost greater than any boy could have imagined. Book / 88 pages / 20 illustrations

Gone Girly for Good

"Big in Japan" by James J Craft. Mike and Ken were one-hit-wonder rock stars. Then they discovered they had fans in Japan, so they left to become famous. Then they discovered that the Japanese didn't know they were guys. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

One Year in Tokyo

By James J Craft, illustrations by Kwon Lee Tran. Mickey is forced to spend a year with his father in Japan. However things often get confused when words get translated from English to Japanese, as Mickey soon finds out... Book / 87 pages / 20 illustrations

Students, Exchanged

"French Dupe" by Joe Six-Pack. Kelley Sue's convinced a French exchange student to disguise himself as a girl. What happens when she realizes he has no intention of returning back home? Book / 57 pages / 15 illustrations

He's a Valley Girl, Fer Sure

From the files of TGStories.com: "Corey Taylor's Big Bodacious Adventure" by Joe Six-Pack. For Corey, the only way he can get into college is to pretend to be a girl. But when does it stop being pretend? When he's cheerleader? A girlfriend? A beauty queen? Book / 78 pages / 17 illustrations

From Boys to Bridesmaids

"Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Groom" by James J Craft. Two spoiled and privileged boys are about to be put in their place by their new step-mother. And their place is by her side as her bridesmaids and daughters. Book / 77 Pages / 16 illustrations

Little Mis-ter Popular

"My Two Moms" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Thanks to his aunt's "Confidence Club," Leon will find a way to become popular, and to get over all his hang-ups... Including his masculinity. Book / 77 Pages / 17 illustrations

Bride to Be

By Joe Six-Pack. Derek and Cole grew up together as kids. One year, though, Cole has to start pitching in at the family wedding business. His life will never be the same. Book / 63 pages / 25 illustrations

Winning is Everything

"Costume drama" by Joe Six-Pack. Seth made a funny little bet for Halloween. He needed to pull off the impersonation of a Cheerleader for a party. What's at stake? 100 million dollars and his manhood. Book / 215 pages / 37 illustrations

Tales of Transformation

He's the Wrong Girl

"Office Chemistry" by Joe Six-Pack. James had to fill in at the reception desk. Problem is, the business is a bio-genetics company. And all of the sudden the coffee tastes funny. Book / 53 pages / 14 illustrations

City Boy, Country Girl

By Joe Six-Pack. Richard's long-forgotten aunt is sick, and he goes to care for her. His calls back home leave his wife Janice confused and unsure about his return. So she goes to find him. But is there much left to be found? Book / 64 pages / 25 illustrations

Thames Greene

By James J Craft. Ira wanted something better for his family. A new start. But in Thames Greene, everyone's getting a new start, whether they want it or not. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

Hiding in High Heels

"How Not to be a Sissy" By Joe Six-Pack. Vince was on the run from people who wanted their millions back. Howard was a friend with a funny little idea and a knack for making subliminal CDs. Mini-Pix / 48 pages / 15 illustrations

A Blessing in Disguise

By KK, illustrations by Kannel. Jay was a witness to a murder, and now he's the target of a vicious criminal. Resorting to a female disguise, he becomes trapped with no way out. Book / 84 pages / 16 illustrations

I'm Your Dolly

"Barbie-in-a-Box" By Joe Six-Pack. Tyler wasn't much of a boyfriend anymore. Jessica wanted to throw him out, but then a better idea came to her, in the form of the Barbie-in-a-Box service. Tyler better get used to pink. Book / 103 pages / 20 illustrations

His Life as a Trophy Wife

"The Puppy Mill" by Joe Six-Pack. Nick had a great life, but then it evaporated. Now he's down on his luck. In steps a wealthy executive wiling to pay him handsomely to pretend to be his wife. What can it hurt? Book / 210 pages / 16 illustrations

Male Monday, Girl Friday

"Hey, Cutie!" by James J Craft. Daniel is going to be promoted from his average life to an exciting executive position. At least, that's what his bosses are telling him. They may not be telling him everything. Book / 58 pages / 20 illustrations

The Happiest Place on Earth

From the files of TGStories.com: "The Fairest One of All" By Joe Six-Pack. Will is a kid looking for a job. He gets one, performing as Snow White at a theme park. For Will, he doesn't suspect that playing the role and wearing the costume is slowly changing him, day by day. Book / 51 pages / 21 illustrations

Hello, Nurse

From the files of TGStories.com: "Quality Health Care" Dane is filling in as a nurse for his pal Jimmy at his new office. Although both are doctors, Dane begins to take to his new role as a nurse. Soon, he feels compelled to be the ideal nurse. Book / 44 pages / 15 illustrations

My Boss, The Bimbo

"If I Were a Betting (Wo)Man" By James J Craft, illustrations by blackshirtboy. CEO Lucas has a superiority complex. When his long-suffering secretary is able to feed into Lucas' competitive nature, he'll make any bet to prove his dominance over women. Book / 38 pages / 10 illustrations

He's the Girl They Want

"Rallies'" by Joe Six-Pack. Spencer has a great new executive job in the food service industry, but first he's got to learn the ropes of the business by waiting on tables. He just doesn't quite fit in with the cheerleader theme. Yet. Book / 63 pages / 22 illustrations

Demoted and Degraded

"Trixie the Secretary" by Angela J. Cindy didn't much like Tom Jones attitude and his advances, so when she has the opportunity to help take the wind out of his sails, she takes it. But she had no idea that it was all designed to make Tom into Trixie the secretary. Book / 87 pages / 17 illustrations

I, Candy

"Sissy Sweets" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Inheriting his family's bakery requires this young man to become the new face of the business. A female face. Book / 45 pages / 15 illustrations

Boyz II Girlz

"The Making of the Ballroom Brats" by Joe Six-Pack. The Ballroom Brats become the newest worldwide celebrity sensation. How did four unsuspecting guys at a fast food joint become the hottest girl group in music? Book / 113 pages / 34 illustrations

His Strangest Desire

"Employee of the Month" by Joe Six-Pack. Mick is declared Employee of the Month, and he's going to find himself hurtling headlong into facing his weirdest inner desire. Book / 59 pages / 19 illustrations

Hard Time or High Heels

"I'm Turning into My Mother" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Colby got deep into debt to a local gangster. Before long, he's on the arm of that very same gangster as his reluctant girlfriend. Book / 75 pages / 20 illustrations

Seriously Skirted

"The Show Piece" by KK. Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Mel finds work at a clinic as a secretary. He slowly begins to fit to role. Book / 75 pages / 19 illustrations

From Mister to Sister

By Melissa N., Dan just wanted to help guide his girlfriend's sister out of her depression. Instead, he's being guided out of his manhood. Book / 84 pages / 24 illustrations

Stories of the Supernatural

A Change for the Better

"Do-Overs" by Joe Six-Pack. Evan wants a chance to do over his biggest mistake. He gets the chance, but he keeps wanting his new life to be a little bit better than the last. Book / 59 pages / 18 color illustrations

Changed and Rearranged

"Wrongs Make Wright" By Joe Six-Pack. Chris and Matt were rivals. Then, Matt decided to show everyone how smart he truly was by impersonating a teacher. But the disguise becomes more and more real, much to Chris' dismay. Book / 74 pages / 19 illustrations

From Pals to Gals

From the files of TGStories.com: "Mandate of the People" By Joe Six-Pack. Teens Jeremy and Stewart are good friends, but a bit thick in the noggin. When they jokingly nominate each other for Prom Queen, they slowly become the perfect candidates, thanks to some magic. Book / 45 pages / 16 illustrations

Crossed Fiction

If the Shoes Fit

"Hand Me Downs" By KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Sydney is a teen who is just trying to make it through the summer with no money. He finds himself wearing hand-me-downs from his sister, and that takes his life in a whole new direction. Book / 98 pages / 30 illustrations

Sisters for the Summer

"Camp Counseling" By Joe Six-Pack. Brock McCade always thought of himself as a real man, or at least he would be one, someday. After summer camp, he's no longer so sure. Book / 76 pages / 17 illustrations

They're the Girls for the Job

"Peace and Harmony" By James J Craft. Illustrations by blackshirtboy. Pete and Harmon need jobs bad. How far would they have to go to get them? Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Summer

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Carl's dream summer was about to become three months of dresses, heels and makeup. Book / 159 pages / 48 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Year

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Book Two in the Blondie Series. Carl's trip to Florida has been horrible enough, trapped in dresses and makeup. Now, high school has presented a whole new level of humiliation for him. Book / 221 pages / 52 illustrations

I Never Wanted to be a Woman

"Politically Corrected" By Cheryl Lynn. Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Michael's politically active mother has decided she's going to make her hippie son over into the daughter she always wanted. Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

Fashion Victims

"Shop Till You Drop" by Lauren Bliss. Illustrations by Fraylim. Teenage boy Jamie just needed clothes for school. Oh, he's going to get clothes for school. Just not male ones. Will he ever need male clothes again? Book / 67 pages / 26 illustrations

Seriously Sissified

A Family Femmed

"The Femmed Family robinson" by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. The Robinson boys all had dreams of their own, once. Now they have new ones, thanks to their stepmother. Book /96 pages / 29 color illustrations

Auntie's Girl Time

By Cheryl Lynn. David was just a young teenage boy who wanted all the things in life a man could look forward to. His aunt, though, is going to make sure he never gets them. Book / 79 pages / 20 illustrations

Revenge of the Cheerleaders

"Pansy Cheers" By Angela J. Patrick Sears was a football player trying to sleep with every cheerleader at his small college. He'd have to pay for his conquests. Book / 116 pages / 19 illustrations

He's Got His Mind Made Up

By James J. Craft. Illustrations by kinkyrocket. Corey has just a sliver of a chance to get into college, but that chance involves becoming his stepmother's maid. And she wants him to fit both the role and the dress. Book / 68 pages / 16 illustrations

Web Classics Revisited

Two Forms of ID

By Joe Six-Pack. Harvey had the unusual ability to convincingly imitate a teenage girl. In desperation, he has to use that talent to make some money. But when is enough enough? Paperback / 194 pages / text only



Reading is Fun de Mental!