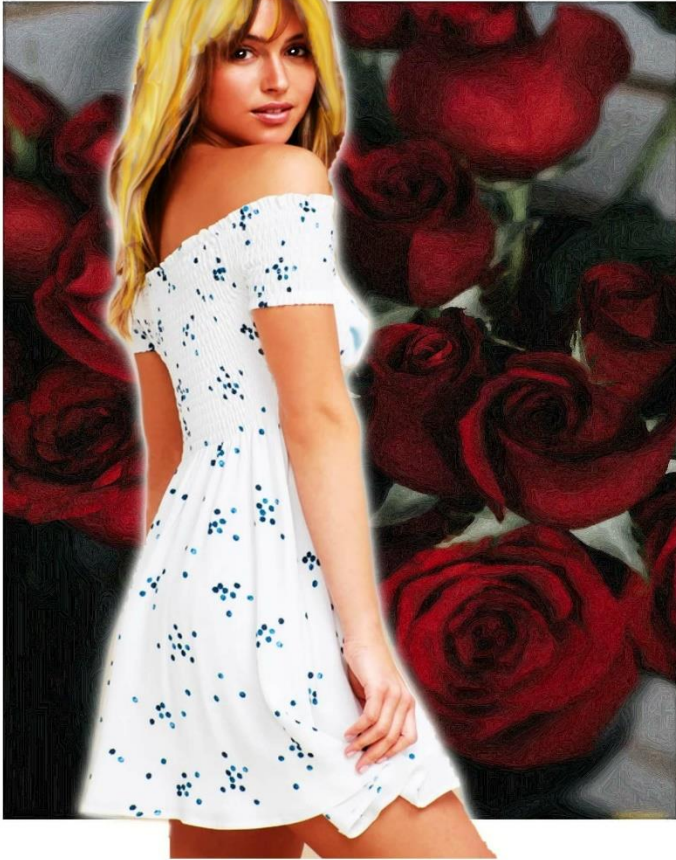


# FREEDOM



**T.G. COOPER  
AND  
ANONYMOUS**

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By

*T.G. COOPER*

AND

ANONYMOUS

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# INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, I have had the pleasure of writing several stories on commission for Anonymous. This is the most special of all those commissions. I hope you enjoy.

Legal Notes

Fiction, people. Fiction.

# CHAPTER 1

*Picture: A mother holding a little boy's hand as they enter a dry cleaner's shop. The mother's eyes look far away, as if she is struggling to remember all the things she needs to do. The boy's head is turned as he stares off in another direction, tugging at his mom's hand, trying to hold her back.*

*Picture: Pink leopards and white tights. Bunheads. Duffle bags. Little girls skipping. Laughing. Two walk together, arms slung over each other's shoulders. A mom stands in front, holding open a glass door. Frosted on the glass the words Dance Academy. Behind them, eyes wide, the little boy outside the dry cleaners.*

"Bradley," Mom says, feeling Bradley tugging back, dragging his feet. "Come. I have a million things to do today."

"What's that?" Bradley asks, staring at the girls, the pink leotards. The laughing. Skipping. The shiny hair. "What are they doing?"

"What?" Mom looks. "Oh. That. Don't worry about it. That's just for girls."

Just for girls. Bradley stares as his mother drags him into the dry cleaners, wanting to catch every moment he can of the— fun. Mom goes to the counter and starts talking to the old man behind the counter. Bradley glances back at the door, steps back. Takes another step back. Another customer pushes the door open, a whoosh of cool air, the bell ringing. Bradley slips out, heart racing. His mom will be mad. He'll probably get in trouble. But he hurries down to where he saw the girls go, and he stops at the window. The girls are on their toes now, arms raised over their heads. The twirl. And Twirl.

“Bradley!” Mom shrieks, pushing her head out the door of the cleaners. “Don’t you ever wander off like that!”

“Sorry,” Bradley says, taking one last look at the girls. He feels relieved his mom isn’t more angry. She seems too busy and distracted to get mad. They finish at the dry cleaners. Drive here. Drive there. Bradley keeps thinking about the girls. It makes him feel— warm. He doesn’t understand it. Girls are dumb, and they have cooties. He raises his arms over his head, fingers together, the same way he saw the girls do, then pulls them down, feeling his cheeks flush.

Pink leotards. White tights. Girls heading to dance class. Bradley looks over and sees his mother going into the laundry, a sad little boy holding her hand. He looks

down and sees he wears a pink leotard. He feels the silky tights hugging his legs, and as he walks under the arm of the Mom holding the door and into the studio, he reaches up and touches the round little ball of hair on top of his head. He stretches. Gets on his toes. Spins. He and the other girls giggle and laugh. They hug. They learn a dance. Bradley feels as if he is floating.

Bradley wakes up, rubs the sleep from his eyes. He's in bed, his Spider Man comforter pulled up to his waist. A dream. He was a girl. At dance class. He feels sick, like someone had punched him in the stomach. His Dad yells at him. When he does something wrong, he calls him a girl. It's bad. Wrong. Bradley isn't a girl. Doesn't want to be one. That would be— terrible, he thinks. The worst thing ever. No. It was just a stupid dream.

He'll never even think about it again, he decides, as he gets up. Never. He doesn't even realize he is skipping as he heads toward the bathroom.

Years pass. Bradley's sister has a slumber party. Bradley hides at the top of the stairs watching as the girls sit in a circle giggling, telling stories. They start playing with make-up, giving each other make-overs. Bradley stares, wondering what it feels like out on blush. Makeup. If only he could go down and be one of the girls— be with the girls, he meant. They have a sheet of fake fingernails,

and pop them off, putting them on their fingers, giggling and laughing, then they all run over to the television and put on a DVD. Sailor Moon. One of the girls looks back toward the stairs. Bradley freezes, holding his breath. As soon as she looks away, he creeps back up the stairs to his room, climbing into bed, pulling his pillow over his head. He can't sleep.

Mom takes Bradley shopping. New clothes for school. As his Mom looks at jeans for him, he glances over to the girls' section, at all the skirts. He wonders what it would be like to wear one. Dumb, he decides. Girl things are dumb.

But wouldn't it be fun?

Hannah Montana. Bradley's sister is in the living room, laying on her belly watching, legs hooked together at the ankles, chin propped on her fists. Bradley has his hot cars, a yellow dump truck. He shifts them around, pretending to care, but he is watching Hannah Montana out of the corner of his eyes. She's so pretty. He loves her long, blonde hair. He reaches up and pretends to brush hair back from his shoulders, the same way he's seen her do it. She's wearing a pink leather jacket, a flouncy skirt and sparkly leggings. Bradley aches looking at the outfit. Why can't boys wear clothes like that? As Hannah talks to one of her friends, she kind of waves her hands around, and with one



hand on his truck, Bradley waves the other, pretends to toss his hair.

Bradley's sister looks back over her shoulder and sees him. Smiles a knowing smile. Bradley picks up his truck and cars, hurries back upstairs to his room. He feels like he's just done something bad. He doesn't want to get into trouble. Is his sister going to tell on him? Worse— does she KNOW?

Bradley is home alone. He shuffles along in his Mom's heels. They are far too big for his feet, so he can only shuffle forward. He's wearing one of her dresses— white silk with little blue flowers. It's too big, so he's holding up the hem. He doesn't want it to drag on the floor and get dirty. One of her big, floppy hats hangs over his eyes. A string of pearls hangs around his neck, and long, sparkling clip-on earrings dangle from his ears. His heart races. He doesn't understand it, but he just — needed— to put on these clothes. He makes his way to his mom's mirror, pushes the floppy hat out of his eyes and looks at himself standing there in his mom's dress. He turns to the side, the same way he's seen her do, looks at his profile, then turns his back to the mirror and looks over his shoulder, just like his mom does.

He laughs. It's funny, really. Fun. He shakes his hips, tries to turn in the heels, almost stumbles. It's fine. He isn't

really doing anything bad. He won't get in trouble, not as long as no one ever knows. He knows he would get in so much trouble if he ever got caught. Thinking about getting caught makes him nervous. What time is it? When will his Mom get home? He steps out of the shoes, the dress. He tries to put everything back exactly the same way he found it. No one can suspect. No one can ever know. His cheeks burn with shame at the thought anyone would ever discover his secret.

“Goodnight, sweetheart,” Mom says, patting Bradley on the head.

“Night, Mom,” he answers. She turns out the light, closes the door. His Superman nightlight glows from the socket across the room. He wanted Wonder Woman, but he knew he couldn't have it. He waits, heart racing, and when he's sure it's safe, he climbs out of bed, gets down on his hands and knees, reaches under his bed and pulls out a plastic case that reads Barbie on the cover. Bradley smiles, runs his fingers across the raised lettering. His sister had outgrown it. His parents were going to put it in the yard sale they had. Bradley had taken it from the pile of stuff in their garage the night before the sale, snuck back to his room with it.

He opens the case and his eyes sparkle as he looks over the make-up inside. Bradley turns on a flashlight and,

sitting cross-legged, he brushes some of the eyeshadow over his eyes, rubs some blush into his cheeks. Finally, wiggling with excitement, he takes a tube of lipstick and rubs it across his lips. He looks at himself in the mirror, and — he's pretty. "I'm pretty," he thinks, looking at the soft pink above his eyes, his cheeks. There are fake fingernails in the kit, just like the ones he saw his sister and her girlfriends putting on at the slumber party. Carefully, he pulls the plastic tabs off one, sticks it to over his fingernail, holds out his hand, turning it this way and that, admiring the way his finger looks, the nail. He puts the others on one by one. There are only nine, so one of his fingers remains plain, boring. Boy.

Sighing, Bradley takes another look at himself in the plastic, Barbie mirror. Looks at his hands, keeping the one finger bent closed, so he doesn't see the plain nail. He closes the make-up kit and slides it back under his bed. Changes his mind and takes it to his closet, hiding it behind a stack of old board games. Then, he goes and washes his face, again and again until he's sure all traces of the make-up have been removed. Then, he washes it one more time. He can't even think about what will happen if anyone sees he's been wearing lipstick. The other boys would make fun of him, he knows. Everyone would make fun of him.

No one can know. Ever. But, if only. If only they could.

# CHAPTER 2

## Bradley Age 10

“How was your game?” Mom asks. She’s at the stove, stirring a steaming pot of spaghetti.

Bradley tosses his baseball glove on the table. “Okay,” he says. He likes his baseball uniform. It’s actually just like his sister’s softball uniform, so he feels cute when he wears it. But, he doesn’t really fit in with the team. The boys don’t get him. Still, his dad wants him to play baseball, so he does it.

After dinner, he studies, goes to his room, goes to bed.

Bradley dreams he’s at school. Sitting in class. The class is taking turns reading aloud from the textbook—some story about kids who live in some kind of weird cave, and they want to get out and see what’s outside. There’s a knock on the door and Assistant Principal Bob comes in along with a girl. Bradley looks up and stares at her. He knows her from somewhere, he thinks. She’s blonde, pretty, wearing a white dress, black tights. *I know her*, Bradley thinks.

“Excuse me, Mrs. Garret. Class. I just wanted to bring the newest Chipmunk here at Chalker Academy- Brittany Morgan.” Brittany smiles at everyone, waves. The kids all

clap. Brittany looks right at Bradley, smiles, walks right toward him. The desk next to Bradley suddenly sits empty, and Brittany sits, smoothing his dress under her legs.

“Hey,” Brittany says.

“Hey,” Bradley answers, looking at the girl. There is something about her. The class goes back to reading. Bradley glances at Brittany from the corner of his eye. She’s reading along with the class, and she tosses her golden hair. Gives him a wink.

When class ends, Bradley feels a tug on his sleeve. He turns. It’s Brittany. “Hey,” she says. “Um, since I’m new here and everything, can you show me where the lunchroom is?”

“S- sure,” Bradley says. He feels— nervous. There is something about this girl. Not only the weird feeling that he knows her, but that somehow, she knows him. They walk to the lunchroom together.

“Do you like going to school here?” Brittany asks.

“Not really,” Bradley says.

Brittany grabs his arms and giggles. “Who likes school?”

They eat lunch together. They talk— actually, Brittany does most of the talking, chattering away about Hannah Montana. Bradley just listens, nods. Smiles. Then, Brittany suddenly stops talking. She stares at Bradley, eyes wide. “Omigod!”

“What?” Bradley says, a French fry halfway to his mouth.

“I just realized something,” Brittany says.

Bradley feels— weird. Exposed. Naked. He doesn’t know what to do, to say, so he shoves the fry into his mouth and chews, shrugging. “Um?”

Brittany smiles, leans forward and with a conspiratorial smile on her face she whispers, “You’re really pretty.”

Bradley blushes, looks away. Swallows. “No,” he says. “I’m not.”

They study together. Hang out. Talk. The dream blurs and shifts. Bradley and Brittany roller skating, holding hands, spinning around and around on the roller rink. They ride bikes down to the Cone Zone, share an ice cream cone, getting ice cream on their cheeks and noses, laughing. Bradley goes over to Brittany’s house, and they go down to the basement Rec room. “You wanna watch Hannah Montana?” Brittany says.

“No,” Bradley says, ashamed, terrified that she’ll see through him. “That’s for girls.”

Brittany laughs as she grabs Bradley’s hand and drags him to the couch. “I wasn’t asking, silly. I know you want watch Hannah!”

Bradley resist, but Brittany says, “It’s okay, you know.”

Bradley goes over, they watch together, eating popcorn, giggling.

Brittany is standing on the diving board at Bradley's family pool. "And now," she says, raising her arms. "The Ultimate Cannonball!" With a shriek she leaps in the air, folds herself into a ball and plops into the water with a huge splash. When she comes up for air, holding her nose, he claps and whoops. Bradley wears a sopping wet t-shirt with his swim trunks. He's never felt comfortable going bare-chested. Brittany climbs out of the pool, and Bradley picks up a towel, goes over and drapes it over her shoulders. She looks at him, suddenly serious, her usually bright face darkening.

"What is it?" Bradley says. She looks— sad, and that makes him feel sad.

"You know who I am," Brittany says.

"Yeah. You're my friend, Brittany," Bradley says.

"What?"

"No," Brittany says, turning to face him, droplets of water sparkling in her hair, on her shoulders. "Who I really am."

"What are you talking about?" Bradley says, stepping away, but Brittany grabs his hands, pulls him close.

"I'm you," Brittany says. "The real you. You know that, *Brittany*. You've always known."

Bradley nods. There's a lump in his throat, something knots in his stomach.



“I want to come out—in the real world. I want to play and have fun! I need you to let me out. Please. I’m tired of hiding.”

Bradley shakes his head. He looks at her long, golden hair, wet, sticking to his neck, her pretty face. “I can’t,” Bradley says. “I’m not a girl. My dad... everyone would laugh at me...”

“Please! I just want to be free!” Tears start to pool in the girl’s eyes. She squeezes Bradley’s hands. “I can’t hide anymore!”

Bradley yanks his hands free, the world turning blurry as his own eyes fill with tears. “I can’t! I can never be you!”

Brittany turns and runs away, tossing the towel aside.

“Brittany!” Bradley calls after her.

*Picture: A child stands next to a pool on a bright summer day. All alone.*

## CHAPTER 3.

### Age 13

Picture: A boy asleep. His room all blues and greys. His quilt— pinstripes with the logo of the New York Yankees baseball team. On the walls-- posters of athletes— Derek Jeter, Michael Jordan, Peyton Manning. A cellphone lodged in a docking station shaped like the Death Star. The screen lights, and a song begins to play: Changes, by David Bowie.

Bradley sits up, stretches and yawns. He smiles and thinks, *I don't feel any different.*

He looks at his phone and sees he already has a text from Kallie: Happy Birthday! Followed by a dozen smiley face emojis. Bradley swallows a giggle. Grabs the phone and texts back, *I did it!*

He rolls out of bed, showers, goes to his closet— neatly pressed jeans on hangers on one side, shirts organized by color on the other. He dresses, goes back to check his hair, puts a little more product in, pushing it up, getting the perfect bedhead, wishing he could have gotten blonde highlights, but he knew his Dad would kill him. That wasn't true, or it was, but the real reason he'd never gotten

highlights, or an earring was because— well, people might guess.

Downstairs the kitchen swims in the smells warm, toasty grain smells of waffles cooking, and as he bounds down the stairs his mom turns and smiles. “Where’s Bradley?”

“What?”

“I was expecting my little boy, but you’re a big, strong teen-ager!”

“Mom...”

“Where’s my little boy?”

Bradley notices a balloon hovering over the table. It reads Happy Birthday!

“Come here!” Mom says, opening her arms. Bradley reluctantly goes in for the hug, and his mom squeezes him extra tight. Touches his cheek. “My little boy is growing up,” Mom says, and her eyes are wet, and she looks like she might cry.

“I’m still just 13,” Bradley says.

“Nerd,” his sister says, flicking his ear as she walks into the kitchen.

“I made your favorite,” Mom says. “Blueberry waffles!” She turns away, grabbing warm plates from the oven, already with stacks of steaming hot waffles. She brings the plates to the table, setting them down in front of her kids. “Happy birthday!” She says.

“Yeah,” Sis says as she smears a blob of margarine on her waffles. “Happy birthday, dork.”

“Thanks,” Bradley says, grabbing the plastic bottle of Log Cabin syrup and squirting the thigh, brown sweetness over his waffles.

“Careful,” Sis says. “You’ll ruin your girlish figure.”

“Shut up,” Bradley says, blushing.

Sis kicks him under the table, gives him that knowing wink as she cuts her waffle into quadrants, as usual.

“My girlfriend texted me already,” Bradley says.

“Oh, that’s so sweet,” Mom says, joining them with her own single waffle.

Sis just smiles.

At school, Kallie gives him a big hug and 13 birthday kisses on the cheek. Bradley walks her to class. They hold hands. Kallie had a growth spurt, and she is now a few inches taller than Bradley. She has long blonde hair, and she’s started to get— soft in certain places. She takes ballet, does yoga, cheers, and she is always so stylish and put together. She’s pretty much everything— everything Bradley wants to be.

Bradley, meanwhile, is a late bloomer. He still looks like a little kid with his slender build, and his voice hasn’t changed yet. It’s a little embarrassing, and he wishes his voice would change, but he’s also glad it hasn’t. When he

sings along with Brittany Spears, he sounds just like her, which is the worst or best thing, he can't decide.

Kallie chatters on about a new routine the cheerleaders have worked out. "Mrs. Orgeron says it's too adult," Kallie fumes. "But my mom is going to talk to the principal!" Kallie stops. "All we're doing is this move from Janet Jackson." Kallie puts her hands on her head, thrusts her hips back and forth. "I mean, only, like, everyone does it. It's just a dance move, right?"

"Yeah," Bradley says. "Oh, hey, those guys are watching you."

Kallie glances over and sees the guys, tosses her hair. "Of course, they are," she says. "Don't be jealous, doll. Gotta go." She struts into class, nose in the air.

Bradley watches her, wondering what it's like to be pretty, to have people look at you all the time.

"Dude, your girlfriend is a freak," one of the guys says as he and his pack walk by.

"Totally," Bradley says, playing the role, pretending to be a dude. As he goes to class, he is jealous, but not for the reasons Kallie thinks. The girls are different now, or Bradley feels different about them. He thinks about them and their— roundness— and gets tingles. He loves the shapes of their faces, their skin, the sound of their voices. They get to wear cute clothes, even their jeans are cuter.

Kallie's jeans have sparkly stars on the back pockets, while his are just plain.

They have a party at his house after school. Kids from school, parents, some of his sister's friends sit with her off to the side. Bradley thought maybe he was too old for this stuff now, but it actually doesn't suck. Now that he's 13, he's allowed to invite girls to his party. His parents think it's cute, they want him to date, have a girlfriend. He watches Kallie and her friends, the way they stand, move their hands.

He and his friends are sitting around a table playing Texas Hold 'Em. Somehow it became the big trend that year. "Hey, sport," Dad says as he walks by, putting his hands on Bradley's shoulders, squeezing. "How ya doing?"

"Pretty good," he says, hiding his cards from his Dad, who is trying to peek. "Stop," he says. "You have a tell."

"Me?" Dad says, laughing his deep, booming laugh. "Never show anyone your cards," Dad says. "That's my son."

His Mom bought a bunch of subs. The kids eat and drink pop, then comes time for the cake. Bradley sits at the head of the table while everyone sings to old birthday song. He's grinning, smiling. Mom puts the cake in front of him, candles blazing. "Make a wish!" She says.

Bradley looks at all the candles there, little flames dancing above the blue and white striped candles. The cake has a Yankee's logo, a baseball bat made out of frosting. Bradley's Dad loves the Yankees, so Bradley goes along with it. Bradley smiles, closes his eyes, the wish bubbles up from deep inside him. "I wish I were a girl," he thinks, and he blows across the cake, watching the fires spark and die, the candles now a row of black, smoking wicks.

*Picture a boy sitting at his family's dining room table, a birthday cake in front of him, friends and family all around, clapping and cheering. The boy smiles. He has never looked happier. And yet, should someone look closely, someone who knew just what to look for, they would see it in his eyes, shadow behind the light— a soul deep sadness.*

The party came to an end. Everyone went home. Bradley helps his Mom take down the decorations. In the living room they can hear Doc Brown screaming, "1.21 gigawatts? 1.21 Gigawatts!?"

"So, did you have fun at your party?" Mom says.

Bradley hears the need in her voice. He's sensitive to other people's feelings. She tries so hard. She wants her kids to be happy, and she suffers trying to always make

everything perfect. “Yeah,” Bradley says, going over to her, putting a hand on her shoulder. “Thanks, Mom. It was really great.”

“Kallie seems nice.”

“Mom.”

“Okay. Okay,” Mom says.

Bradley hugs her. “I love you Mom,” he says. He knows she needs to hear it. She needs to hear it all the time. He just wishes he could make her believe it— really believe it. Once everything is cleaned up, they go into the living room and watch the rest of *Back to The Future* with Dad and Sis. It’s a good movie, Bradley likes it, but it annoys him a little that none of the girls really gets to do anything.

It’s been a good day. A long day. Bradley falls right to sleep. He dreams he’s down in their basement rec room playing *The Adventures of Link*. He’s come to a ledge in a dungeon, a dead end.

“You have to jump,” Brittany says. She’s sitting on the couch next to him. “Take a leap of faith.”

“Jump?” Bradley is surprised and not surprised to see her there. He knows he’s dreaming. He looks at Brittany. She’s grown up, too. He sees she has small bumps pushing out the front of her tank top. Her bra straps stray



from beneath the tank top straps, bright white against her tan shoulders.

“I thought you hated me,” Bradley says, looking at her, feeling a pang of jealous. She’s really pretty, and she seems so mature now, the way she sits, with this kind of super confidence.

“I don’t,” Brittany says. “I shouldn’t have said that.”

“You left me alone.”

“You were never alone,” Brittany says. “I was always there.” She put her hand on Bradley’s arms. “I need you to set me free.”

Bradley yanks his arm away. “I can’t. You’re not real.”

“I can’t keep hiding,” Brittany says, and then she lowers her voice, doing her best impression of a boy. “Dude, let’s hit a ball with a stick. It’s so cool. Huh. Huh.”

“I don’t sound like that.”

“Bro. Huh. Huh. Let’s eat some bugs and have a fart contest. Huh. Huh.”

“I don’t act like that.”

“You keep on pretending to be what we aren’t. You’re killing me!”

“My Dad!”

“You’re Dad isn’t making you lie to yourself.”

“I can’t just turn into a girl. I’m not a girl. My Dad—“

“Our Dad will still love you,” Brittany says, getting up. Pacing. “Our Dad will always love you.”

“You don’t know him.”

“YOU don’t know him, and, anyway, he doesn’t know you, because you won’t let him.”

“Stop! You’re crazy. Do you think I can just change? Just be someone else?”

“Yes, because you’ve been someone else your whole life. The question is— can you be you?”

“No. I can’t. Please. Why can’t it just be like this? Why can’t we just keep going on like we’ve been doing? Is it really so bad?”

“It’s hell. Hiding. Sneaking. Wishing every day I could just do the simplest things. Boys get earrings, wear cute shoes, but you won’t because you’re afraid.”

“I’m not afraid.”

“Then leap,” Brittany says. “Take that leap. Set me free.”

Bradley looks at the TV screen, Link standing there at the edge of the cliff. “And what happens? What do you want me to do? Go to school wearing a skirt? Stuff toilet paper in a bra? Do you know what would happen to me?”

“There’s only one way to find out. Do it. All I am asking now is for you to say you’ll do it. You’ll set me free. Bradley, I need this. You need this. It’s okay to be afraid. Walk right into that fear. Set me free.”

“I can’t,” Bradley says. “I’m sorry.”

“Then I will do it myself,” Brittany says. She grabs the controller from his hands.

“Hey!”

Bradley watches as Link jumps off the cliff, plunges down into darkness... down... down... and lands on a ledge. Brittany works the controller, Link hoping from ledge to ledge, left left, right right... and lands safely at the bottom of the fall. In front of him, a treasure sits in a beam of light, glowing.

Brittany tosses the controller back to Bradley and says, “If you won’t let me out, I will find a way out myself, doll. Now, wake up!”

# CHAPTER 4.

## Age 16

Brad sits at his computer, tapping a foot as he reads. He doesn't even really know how he found this website: Nifty's Story Archive. He'd heard about a movie— Dr. Jekyll and Mrs. Hyde, about some guy who turned into a girl, and decided to search for it because it sounded dumb and stuff, and somehow he'd ended up here, reading a story called, "It's Hard to Be a Man."

His expensive clothes no longer fitted him. His trousers were too tight, but his belt was loose. Patrick's eyes were riveted in horror at the unmistakable swelling under his shirt.

I'm dreaming, he thought, I have to be dreaming! His hands flew to his chest and cupped the mounds. Then his hands scrabbled at his shirt and ripped it open, revealing the creamy mounds that lay beneath.

There was no doubt, he had breasts! Large, female breasts!

"No!" he shouted in terror. That wasn't his voice! Even that had been somehow changed. It was now higher, feminine.

Patrick shoved his hand between his legs, but he already knew what he would find. The familiar bulge had gone, to be replaced by a more discreet mound. He had run his fingers over many like it in his time, but he had never expected to find one there.

The guy had been cursed, turned into a woman. He could only be a man if he concentrated really hard. Bradley read through it, fascinated. It was like someone had read his mind, knew all about his secret thoughts. He read another and another. There were dozens of them. Macho. Change of Life. Team Spirit.

The sun rose, and Brad realized he'd been reading all night, his head swimming with images from the stories— buttons popping off shirts as breasts swelled on men's chests, guys grabbing their throats as their voices cracked and they found themselves with the squeaky voices of little girls, boys forced to take ballet, blushing as they were dragged into dance classes wearing leotards and point shoes...

Guys tottering around in high heels, getting waxed, wizards who ran stores in the mall, beaches where guys always ended up hot girls in bikinis...

They were all fantasies he'd had, or fantasies he didn't even know he had, but when he read the stories, it wasn't like he was discovering something new, but remembering something he'd forgotten.

Brad's days went on as always. School. Video games. Sometimes during the day he'd think about one of the stories, a scene or an image. Prince Altan twirling and calling out, "Tell me what I should do!" A story from Sandy Thomas Books— two guys took steroids hoping to get big and strong, and instead they start turning into girls. One of them is changing when his little sister walks in and sees his budding little breasts and runs to tell her mom. He couldn't wait to get home, do his chores, get to his room and read. He couldn't believe how many stories there were out there, so many different websites.

One night he found himself sitting at his computer reading. He'd stumbled on something called The Fictionmania Archive— basically a bottomless well of TG fiction with new stories added every day:

"Hey," Paul said to his buddy, Frank. "Look at this old lamp." He pulled the lamp from a. Junk pile in. His Aunt

Gertrude's garage, blew on it, sending a cloud of dust swirling across the garage. It was an old Gaslamp, like the kind of thing you might see hanging in a mine in an old movie.

"Lame," Frank said.

"Maybe there's a genie inside," Paul said, turning the lamp over, looking at the manufacturing label on the bottom: 1001 Nights MFC. Arab, Alabama.

"Yeah. Why don't you rub it and find out you're a dumbass?"

"Genie," Paul said, putting on a "wizard" voice and rubbing the lamp. "Come out come out wherever you are..."

There was a flash and a concussive blast of wind that sent both Paul and Frank flying off their feet. Paul rubbed his eyes and looked up to see— a crazy old miner with a shaggy beard and a flannel shirt doing some kind of Scottish dance. "Hardeharhar! I'm Gene the Genie! I'll grant you three wishes!!!! Har! Har!"

"What the heck?" Paul said, shaking his head.

"If you're a genie," Frank said. "How come you look like a crazy homeless man?"

"What?" The genie looked down at himself. "The last guy that found me was a crazy old minor. I forgot. Like

to choose a form my master appreciates. Let's see." He looked at Paul, narrowed his eyes, there was a blur and now Jennie Hastings stood there in a bikini and heels. She tossed her hair and said, "better."

"Holy shit! Much better!" Frank said.

"Your wish is my command," the Genie said, putting her pinkie into her mouth. "Now, make a wish!"

*Please don't wish to get into some girl's pants....*

Bradley thought. *So cliché.*

"You should wish to get into Jennie Hasting's pants!" Frank said.

"Not world peace? A cure for cancer?"

"You are so lame!" Frank said. "You could totally do Jennie, bro!"

"Okay. Okay," Paul said, getting excited by the idea, as well as the sight of the genie looking just like Jennie, totally filling out that bikini like a super model. "I wish I could get into Jennie Hastings' pants!"

The genie smirked. "You sure that's your wish, honey? That exact wish?"

"Yes!"



"Okay!" She waved her arms, and Paul felt his butt swelling, his hips flaring out.

"What?" Paul said, reaching back to feel his big, plump butt. Just then, he felt his chest tingle, and then he looked down to see nipples pointing out the front of his shirt and then rising, rising as big, firm round breasts swelled on his chest, his t-shirt shrinking and turning into a halter top. "Noooooooooooo!" Paulina screamed, but even as he screamed his voice rose from a deep, manly voice to the tea kettle shriek of a terrified little girl.

Of course, Bradley thought, smiling. Another wish-related gender swap.

Just then he heard a familiar giggle. He turned, and his mouth dropped open as he looked at a gorgeous 16-year-old girl stretching out on his bed. Brittany had grown up. Bradley's eyes rose up along her long, tone legs, to her full breasts, her long, golden hair. She was playing with a strand of that hair with a slender hand, her nails long and manicured, bangles and bracelets sparkling on her slender wrists.

"Brittany?" Remembering what he'd been reading, he reached over and turned off his monitor. He met her big,

sparkling eyes, then looked back down over her body.

“You look—“

“Amazing?” She said, running her hand over her smooth thigh. “I know. Whatcha reading?”

“Nothing,” Bradley said. “Something about football?”

Brittany giggled. She pushed herself up, her hair tumbling across her eyes. The strap of her tank top slipped off her shoulder, leaving her rounded shoulder exposed, her black bra strap. She licked her lips. “I think you’re getting horny thinking about what it would be like to be a hot girl.”

“Yeah. Right,” Bradley said.

Brittany got onto all fours and crawled across the bed towards him, letting her ENTIRE body wiggle. “I really like that one about the guy who can’t stop playing with a dildo,” Brittany said.

Bradley just stared, shaking his head. She was so gorgeous and— flirty. “Doesn’t ring a bell.”

Brittany sat on the corner of the bed, legs spread wide. She reached up and gathered her hair, thrusting her breasts forward, and then she suddenly had it pulled back in a ponytail, which she fiddled with, keeping her chest out. “Oh, you know,” Brittany said. “The guy had been a football player, and then he was turning into a woman... developing breasts. and they were making him learn to dance in heels...”

The phrases alone made Bradley's cheeks burning....  
"making him dance in heels... developing breasts..."

"And then when he went to his room, even though he was still pretending, trying to act like he was a boy, he would play with his dildo for— hours— and press it between those sweet blossoming breasts of his..."

"That's crazy..."

"And while he was getting off, he would make little noises in that little girl voice they'd given him.... Ugh... uh.... oh...." Brittany closed her eyes and made those little noises... "omigod, yes.... And the whole time he was in denial, refusing to accept that he was becoming a woman, wanting what a woman wants..."

Bradley couldn't take her eyes off her as she... moaned.... Throwing her head back... His whole body was getting hot.... "Stop," he said.

Brittany stopped, meeting his eyes again, smiling. "You naughty boy," she said. "Sneaking up here to read those stories. Imagining it's you that's the one being forced to be a girl."

Bradley's eyes drifted down to her chest, to the pert, firm breasts swelling out the front of her shirt.

Brittany smiled, cupped her breasts, lifted. "You want to know what it's like to have your won perfect breasts," she said. "How it feels. How they feel." She let go of her

breasts and let her hands drop down to the space between her tan thighs. “You want one of these so bad.”

“Please stop,” Bradley said, his voice getting hoarse.

“But why?” Brittany asked. “I have good news. Take a good look. Enjoy the view. Because you will look just like this. You’ll have this gorgeous body. You don’t have a choice. I am going to be free. I am going to remake you in my image.”

“You know it isn’t possible.”

“Bradley, your life is going to be so much fun. Sunbathing with the other girls, gossiping by the pool. Going to the mall, shopping, getting your nails done. Watching, like, so many make-over videos... looking for cute new ways to do your mascara on Pinterest... and, of course, obsessing over the Kardashians... waist training... Gilmore Girls marathons...”

“Why can’t you just deal with reality?” Bradley said.

“All of that... all of this.... It can’t ever happen.”

“It will happen,” Brittany says. “In fact, I’ve already started to fix you.”

“What does that mean?”

“You’ll see,” Brittany says. “It’s so cute the way you’re sitting, by the way.”

“What?” Bradley looked down to see that he’s crossed his legs at the ankles, has his hands folded demurely in his lap. He quickly shifts positions, but Brittany only giggles.

“You ever heard the phrase Act as if? You’re going to act the girl and become the girl.”

“Like, as if,” Bradley said, slitting his eyes. “Whatever!”

“So manly!”

Bradley woke, head on his desk, a little drool on the corner of his mouth. He blinked. Shook his head. Another one of those dreams. God. Brittany had been so hot. She’d really grown up. He thought about her cupping her breasts. He did wonder what it would be like to have a pair of his own. But that was just normal curiosity, he supposed. He didn’t give another thought to Brittany’s threat as he crawled into bed. She’d been saying the same thing for years. Bradley stretched out on his belly, drifting toward sleep.

“On your side,” he heard Brittany whisper, “you can’t sleep on your stomach with such big breasts.”

“Hmmmnnn,” Bradley murmured, barely hearing her, but he rolled onto his side, hug his pillow to his chest and pulled his knees up, curling up around his pillow.

# CHAPTER 5.

## It Begins

The day started out like most days for Bradley. He got up, took a shower, smelled some clothes and got dressed, pulled on a pair of Nike trainers. Ate some breakfast. Grunted at his Mom and sister. Left just in time, hurried across campus yawning, bleary, stumbled into First Hour, sat down in an open desk toward the back of the room. Didn't even notice Kallie, the girl he'd gone steady with back when he was 13, sitting next to him. That is, not until she said, "Hey."

Bradley looked over, "hey." They had drifted apart after their tween crush ended, never really talked all that much.

"Omigod," Brittany said in his head. "Her hair looks so cute like that. Tell her!"

*Am I dreaming?* Bradley thought, glancing over his shoulder, looking for Brittany.

"You're wide awake," Brittany said. "I figured out a way to be here all the time."

*No. That's not going to work for me.*

"No time to argue. Tell her! Say, your hair looks totes cute."

Never, Bradley thought, but then he turned back to face Kallie and said, “Your hair looks totes cute like that!”

“For real?” Kallie said, clearly pleased. “I just had it done, and I’m kind of nervous.”

“Say, omigod, no, it’s so pretty.”

“Omigod!” Bradley heard himself say. “No. It’s soooo pretty!”

“Thanks!” Kallie said, just as the bell rang. She gently touched Bradley’s arm, but it wasn’t like a guy girl thing, more like... sisterly. It made Bradley feel warm.

*You’re making me sound like an idiot!*

“She’s your BFF,” Brittany answered, annoyed. “You need to have her back.”

*This has to be a dream,* Bradley thought.

The teacher came and droned on forever. The bell rang. “Text me,” Kallie said.

“Yeah,” Bradley said, confused. “Okay.”

He started toward his next class, saw some of his friends standing in a circle. He hung out with the nerds—they were all about video games and comic books.

“What’s up?” Bradley said, pushing into the circle.

“The new Assassin’s Creed. Noah got an advanced copy.”

“Oh, cool...” Bradley started, but then Brittany told him what to say and he heard himself say, “Another

misogynistic male power fantasy. How come the assassin can't be a girl?"

"Here we go again," Noah said. "Girl Power!"

The guys all laughed.

*Ahhhh! Why did you make me say that! I sound like an idiot!*

"Your posture is terrible," Brittany said. "Shoulders back, keep your chin level and, oh, throw a hand on your hip."

*Please, no,* Bradley answered even as he did everything she said.

"Play with your hair and tell them you do think the assassin is really cute."

*NO! And I don't have enough hair to...*

But even as he objected, Bradley reached up and started to twist his now shoulder length hair around his finger, saying, "That assassin is really cute, though."

"And now your usual boy crazy babbling," Noah said. "You are such a blonde."

Brittany gave him his instructions, and despite his every impulse to resist Bradley said, "Oh!" Spun and marched away with his nose in the air, calling back, "Jerk!"

What the hell is happening to me? Bradley said as he found a desk in his next class. He could feel his hair now against his neck, bangs sweeping across his forehead. He



grabbed a chunk and pulled it around to see that he was, indeed, now the possessor of a mop of golden blonde hair.

*I'm a blonde now?*

"We always were," Brittany said. "We always were. And don't worry. You look cute."

*I don't want to look cute,* Bradley said, fishing his cellphone out of his pocket, turning on the camera and looking at himself. He now had a messy blonde bob, and— *My eyebrows!* His eyebrows had been plucked into slender arches and looked like they had been filled in with brown eyebrow pencil. He glanced around, humiliated, tried to brush his bangs over his eyebrows. *Fix this!*

*Everyone is going to laugh at me!*

"You love it," Brittany said. "Don't even try to deny it, girl."

Bradley did love it. He couldn't deny it, but he did not love everyone seeing him like this, knowing his secret shame. *Please stop. I am begging you. Let's talk about this later. Just don't change anything else!*"

The bell rang. The teacher came in and droned on and on. Bradley couldn't stop playing with his hair, pushing his bangs down, trying to hide his eyebrows. He didn't even notice that he'd crossed his legs like a girl. Bored, he started to draw hearts in his notebook.

Lunchtime came, Bradley wandered into the lunchroom, started to go and sit at his usual table with

Noah and his friends. “No, no,” Brittany sang in his head. “You sit with the girls now.”

The girls? Bradley looked over to see Kallie waving him over. She was sitting at her usual table with the other cheerleaders.

*I can't...* But Bradley felt as if someone shoved him from behind and found himself stumble walking toward the girl's table. *They won't want me sitting with them, a boy, ruining their girl time..*

“Let's find out. Smile pretty,” Brittany said, and a big, pretty smile spread over Bradley's face. “Say Hiiiiiiiiiii.”

Argh! But as Bradley sat, he sang out, “Hiiiiiiiiieeeeeee!” *My voice!* His voice had changed, gotten higher and softer, like any teen-age girls. Just like in the stories, he put his hand to his throat. *What the?*

“I fixed it,” Brittany said.

*Stop it!* Bradley said, but even in his head he now sounded like a girl. Slouching, he glanced at the girls from under his bangs, but no one seemed to notice his voice, hair, eyebrows. They all just chatted away like— it was all normal?

“Posture!” Brittany snapped, and Bradley sat up, shoulders back, chin level. The girls were all chatting about Riverdale, and he warmed quickly. He'd been watching the show compulsively. “Join in already!” Brittany said, and of course, Bradley had no choice and

found himself joining in, nodding and smiling, talking about the cute outfits the girls wore and how hot Archie looked, especially when he took his shirt off! No choice, but then again, this was what he'd always wanted. He was— it seemed like he was just one of the girls.

The lunch bell rang. "Text me!" Kalie sang.

"Kay!" Bradley said, hooking his hair behind his ear as he stood. What was that? He'd felt something in his earlobe, and he touched it now, feeling the fold, hard round shape of an earring. *Of course*, he thought, once more cringing, glancing around. *You have to stop this*, he begged. *People will never forget this*.

"I told you, sweetie," Brittany said. "I am busting out. I will be free."

*They'll make fun of me, like, forever.*

"Ha! The only thing anyone might make fun of you for is being a flatty Patty."

*A what?*

Flatty Patty? I mean, you're sixteen, and you don't even have your boobies yet. Now, that's embarrassing."

*Boobies?* Bradley looked down at his chest— still flat. He sighed with relief. His next class was gym class. He'd never felt comfortable in the boy's locker room with all the— rough housing and whatnot. Today, with his bob and earrings, he felt even more self-conscious than usual. He went straight to his locker. He'd gotten one in the back

corner where he at least could feel a little safe and away from all the madness. “Oooohhhhh, my!” Brittany said. “Look at all the cute guys!”

*No, thank you.*

“You’re living the dream, sister. You know how bad the other girls would like to get a peek in here?”

*I don’t care*, Bradley said as he dialed the combination on lock. *I just want this day to be over*. He pulled his shirt off and dropped it on the bench.

“Me, too,” Brittany said.

Bradley opened his locker and squeaked in shock. Inside he saw leggings, nylon short shorts, a couple sports bras and a Wonder Woman tank top. There was a mirror on the inside of the door, and a little half open bag stuffed with make-up. *If the guys see this?* He spun, backing against his locker, terrified the guy would see all his girl stuff, spreading his arms to either side, trying to block the view.

Their attention drawn by Bradley’s shriek, the guys stopped and looked. “What’s wrong?” Noah said from across the room, one foot on a bench as he tried his shoes.

“Um,” Bradley said in his soft voice, it’s just...”. And just then he felt a tingling in his chest, and then like a fast motion video of a rose bud opening its delicate petals, a beautiful pair of young, firm white breasts blossomed on

his chest as he stood there against his locker, arms spread.

The guys' mouths dropped open, their eyes went wide, and every pair of eyes in the room dropped to the new pair on Bradley's chest. Bradley felt the new weight pulling against his clavicle, felt his nipples now floating out, what seemed like five feet from his chest, felt his chest sway, bounce as he moved. He looked down to see a gorgeous pair of melon-sized boobs swaying on his chest, big, pink nipples growing hard. "Omigod!" He wrapped his arms across his soft breasts, lifting one leg defensively, his cheeks burning. *Boobs? You gave me boobs?*

"Hell, yeah!" One of the guys barked, and he started clapping. The other guys joined in, making wolf calls, whistles. "Nice rack!"

*You're welcome!* Brittany sang.

Bradley turned away, practically trying to crawl into his locker, totally mortified. *I can't believe you did this!*

"That's what you get for keeping me locked away for so long!" Brittany said, giggling.

Noah came over with a towel and held it across Bradley, creating a make-shift curtain. "Put on your bra already," he said.

"My? Bra?" Bradley looked down at the sports bras. They were both white and read Victoria's Secret across the bottom in black letters.

“Come on guys,” Noah said. “Show’s over.”

Bradley grabbed one of his bras, pulled it over his head, tugged it over what seemed to him like massive breasts, feeling the tight fabric pushing them together, pressing them against his chest. He didn’t want the guys to see him wearing a bra, so he grabbed his Wonder Woman tank top— it looked too tiny for him to ever get on— and pulled it on as well, the shirt so tight against his body it was like a second skin.

“Dude,” Noah said. “I know you’re all about ‘free the nipple’ and all that, but wow! That was insane!”

“Free the nipple?” Bradley said, looking at Noah, who couldn’t help but glance down at Bradley’s chest.

“Get dressed already. It’ll be time for class soon.”

Bradley stared. “Don’t you find it strange I suddenly have— boobs?”

Noah shook his head. “Dude, you’ve had boobs since you were 12. Get dressed.”

*What the hell?* Bradley asked Brittany.

*“Get dressed, and I’ll explain, Kate Upton.”*

Bradley looked at the leggings, the shorts. He’d spent years wishing he could wear cute clothes like the girls did in gym class, but he’d never had the courage. Now, he knew he didn’t have a choice, and yet, as he picked up the black leggings, felt the soft fabric, he trembled.

“Go ahead,” Brittany said. “I can’t wait to see how cute you look!”

Bradley sighed, slipping out of his jeans, stepping into the leggings. He felt the stretchy, cool material slide along the top of his foot, then his calf and thighs, As he pulled them up, he felt his legs grown slightly longer, rounder, and as he pulled them up over his thighs he discovered he had hips— well, he’d always had hips, but now he had wide, soft hips and a plump rear, and he had to wiggle and tug to get the leggings on. “My butt,” he whispered, glancing back, trying to get a look.

“Tell me about it,” Noah said. “You have a hotter ass than most of the girls in this school.”

“I do not!” Bradley said, but he felt himself blush with pride at the compliment. Stepping into the skintight short shorts, he looked down to see his shoes had morphed into a pair of pink and white Chuck Taylor’s. Adorable, he thought, lacing them on, remembering how he’d been practically salivating over a pair just like them the last time Mom had taken him to the shoe store.

Once he’d gotten dressed, Bradley walked out of the lock room with Noah. He could feel the eyes of all the guys drop to his ass as he walked out, and his mind swam with a mixture of shame and pride, as well— was it getting him a little hot and thirsty?”

“It’s fun, isn’t?” Brittany said. “Being hot. Having guys want you so bad.”

No, Bradley lied, trying to get used to walking with his wide hips, longer legs, trying to ignore the slight bounce of his breasts with each step.

“You pretty little liar!”

You let all those boys see my— breasts! How could you?

“Oh, come on. You loved it.”

*I so did not!*

“Half those guys will be spanking the monkey thinking about your tits tonight!”

*Gross!*

“I told you to let me out!”

*I’m not talking to you anymore!* Bradley said.

Brittany just snickered.

They were playing volleyball inside, and as Bradley played, everything felt completely wrong. When he put his arms together to set, he felt his breasts squeezing together between his arms, and when he jumped to try and block, he felt his breasts bounce, even in his sports bra. When he landed, he even felt his butt jiggle, and his blonde bangs kept falling into his eyes. Even serving the ball felt weird, with all that extra mass on his chest. Meanwhile, he could feel the guys constantly checking him out, just



waiting for every bounce and jiggle. It made him feel like a piece of meat!

“You’ll get used to that,” Brittany said. “Just wait till you go to the beach in a bikini.”

*I’ll never.... Wait. I’m still not talking to you!*

“Haha. As you’ve noticed, you’re the only one who’s noticed. As you become your real self, everyone else will remember you as always like this. Just like Noah remembers you getting your boobs when you were 12, plus the first time you kissed.

*We what?*

“You’re not talking to me, remember?”

*Shut. Up!*

Volleyball ended. “Good game!” Noah said, putting his hand on the small of Bradley’s back. “You were Wonder Woman out there!”

Bradley felt himself get warm at the touch, and he put a hand on Noah’s arm, squeezing the other boy’s bicep. “Thanks,” he said, his voice softer than usual. He looked at Noah’s face, his mouth. *He probably is a good kisser,* Bradley thought, then fled from the thought. *Stop making me think things like that!*

“Me? That was all you, sister!” Brittany said.

“See you after school,” Noah said, and then he gave Bradley a slap on the ass.

Bradley giggled. “Stop it!” He said, but he was smiling, feeling all... woogly googley.

“No PDAS!” Coach yelled.

Bradley walked away, giggling, then stopped short in front of the door to the boy’s locker room. *Do I still change with the, um, guys?* He asked Brittany.

“Do you want to change with the girls now?”

*Well, I mean, looking like this? Maybe I should change with the girls now?*

“Perv!”

No! I don’t... you know... I didn’t want to...

“Oh, I know. Just teasing. Go ahead. Your locker is there, I mean, why wouldn’t it be since you always were a girl anyway. But, a warning.”

*I’m not going to... check them out or anything.*

“I know. You’re boy crazy. My warning is this: get ready for a lot of jealous from the other girls. I mean, you are so hot— and with those tits of yours?”

Bradley glanced down at the swell of his new breasts. *You really think they’ll be jealous?* Bradley asked, playing with his hair.

“Oh, I **know** they will.”

*Interesting*, Bradley thought as he pushed open the door to the girls’ locker. He couldn’t help but giggle. So *interesting*.

*Picture: A sixteen-year-old girl stands at her locker, a towel wrapped around her body. She's putting on lip gloss, glancing into her vanity mirror at the face of a girl behind her, who stares, consumed with envy.*

## CHAPTER 6.

Bradley's regular clothes had changed. He now found a black dress, a pair of white tights and a white blouse with a Peter Pan collar. An everyday push up bra. It had all come to seem inevitable now, but still he hesitated at the thought of wearing a dress in public. *How about some girl jeans?* He asked, holding the dress against his chest.

*Maybe a t-shirt? Girls wear that kind of stuff?*

"Nonsense," Brittany said. "You would look hot, but today is all about breaking boundaries!"

*Please.*

"Honey, I have waited 16 years to put on a dress, now stop being such a girl about it! Slip out of your towel and put on your bra and panties!"

Bradley reluctantly got dressed. His heart raced as he stepped into his dress, straightened it, and then took a deep breath. The bell had rung. The girls had left. He was alone in the locker room. *I'm staying in here,* he said, sitting down, knees together. *I can't go out there like this.*

He felt a ghostly hand grab his own and pull him to his feet. "Come on now. Time to live the dream."

*More like nightmare!*

"Talk about a drama queen!"

Bradley walked into the corridor, mostly empty but with a few students hurrying late to class. And— well— sure,

one guy did give him the once over, but no one seemed to really notice or care all that much about his clothes. He went to class. Same thing. After class, same thing. “I told you,” Brittany said. “This all seems like just another day to everyone else. You seem like the same old girl.”

Bradley tried to hide his smile. He felt— he liked the way he was dressed, the way he looked— and no one was making fun of him?

After school his ex-girlfriend and new BFF Kallie dragged him to the nail saloon for a mani. She said his nails looked like a ferret had been chewing on them, which was a slight exaggeration. They sat next to each other while the girls did their nails, talking about school, boys, The Umbrella Academy, and, also, boys.

“So, things with you and Noah seem like they are getting pretty serious?” Kallie said.

“Noah?” Bradley said. “No. We’re friends but...”

“Girlfriend, please,” Kallie said. “You guys have been going steady for months! Now, dish!”

Bradley didn’t want her to make her mad, so he made up some stuff— told her some fantasies he’d had over the years involving Sansa Stark, but now just changing the name to Noah. As he told the stories, he started to see them in his mind, more like memories than fantasies. “What do you think of Noah, anyway?” Bradley asked,

tilting his head to the side, twirling one of his bracelets around his wrist. "I mean, do you think he's... um...."

"Cute? Yeah," Kallie said. "In that nerdy, Peter Parker kind of way. Yeah. I think you guys are great together."

"Really?" Bradley sat up. It was important to him that the girls liked his fake boyfriend.

"Oh, yeah. Besides, he's super smart and is going to be a doctor. Come on. You play your cards right; you'll never have to work a day in your life!"

"Come on!" Bradley said. "I'm so not even thinking about that right now."

"Of course not," Kallie said. "You? Never!"

Bradley and Noah had a date set up for that Saturday night. They went to see *Avengers: Endgame*. Throughout the movie, Noah held Bradley's hand, squeezed his knee, hugged him when he started crying after Black Widow died. When the movie ended people stayed around, waiting to see if there was a secret scene, and in the dark Noah cupped Bradley's chin and turned him so they sat face to face. Bradley trembled. *Omigod*, he thought, *is he going to kiss me?*

Noah leaned in, and Bradley started to pull back, but Brittany whispered, "Kiss the Boy" in the melody from the song from *Little Mermaid*.

Bradley closed his eyes, felt Noah's breath against his lips, and then their lips met, sending a shock through Bradley's body. As Noah lingered in the kiss, Bradley felt a heat building between his legs, felt his penis pull inward, inward, and then felt it draw inside him, replaced by the lips of a vagina. Noah started to plant little kisses, first on Bradley's lips, then his neck, his collar bone.... Bradley felt scared, happy... but mostly he felt warm glow, his whole body singing with warmth and pleasure as she reveled in the loving kisses of her boyfriend. *This feels so good,* Bradley said to Brittany. *It feels so right.*

"I know," Brittany answered. "Have fun. Enjoy your new life. I have to go now. Goodbye."

For Bradley, it was like her inner voice burst tiny rays of light, rising up, and then drifting back down into her. She kissed Noah back, ran her nails through his hair, squeezed his shoulders. Brittany was her, and she was Brittany, and of course that was what she had always wanted, always dreamed of, and what had stopped her? Fear. Just a bunch of silly fears. Well, no longer. She was now the girl she'd always been, living her truth, and loving it.

The End