

THE ISLE OF WOMAN

By Dee Dee Perri



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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"THE ISLE OF WOMAN"

By Dee Dee Perri

Chapter 1: The Changeling

The young man, his light yellow-brown hair flecked with gold, dropped his gaze. His eyes were timid, almost fearful. "Doctor, you see..." His voice trailed off again. "It's that..."

"A deer caught in the headlights," thought Dr. Adams, "Yes, exactly like that, big brown eyes that called out please don't hurt me!"

"Mr. Lewis would you please tell me what precisely seems to be your problem." Although the doctor's voice was calm, almost gentle, the sound of his growing irritation was evident even to the distressed patient. The boy has pretty eyes," thought the doctor. "The lashes are unnaturally long and much too thick to be real. Make-up? And the way he's batting them..."

Doctor Adams half suspected that he was being set up, that some kind of prank was being played on him at this very moment. He groaned inwardly. One of the many minor costs of working at a University.

The Doctor, himself, looked increasingly impatient. Irritated with the delay prompted by the necessity of watching the kid remove what seemed to be endless layers of clothing: coat, jacket, sweater, the doctor rolled back upon his heels. Now the boy hesitated, his hands began to shake as he pulled at the buttons of his shirt.

"And now what's this?" thought the doctor. "Under the shirt was some kind of athletic bandage?" Involuntarily the doctor rolled his eyes back and let out a sigh. It was all he could do to maintain a semblance of "bedside manner." It was flu season and the Student Health Center was overrun with hacking, vomiting, DEMANDING students. Even in the best of times, Dr. Adams hated being here in this inadequate and understaffed facility. He should be in private practice making REAL MONEY, not wiping the snot filled noses of brats or being jerked around by Frat Rats. Under his breath he cursed yet again the state contract he had signed during medical school. Two more years!

The kid's face, which had been kind of pasty when he had begun to undress, began to change. He started to blush, first around his neck and then eventually across his entire face. "Please!" growled Dr. Adams as if to say enough is enough. The elastic bandage trailed off the examination table and down onto the floor to join the impressive mound of discarded clothing. For a moment, the boy clutched the end of the bandage to his chest and then, after an audible gulp, finally let it drop.

Gynandromorphic. Mature feminine breasts. A general lack of body hair. So what? The doctor's face retained it's professional but slightly bored expression as he reexamined the boy's medical record. "Why isn't this condition listed here?" he said, tapping the folder. "Hmm?"

The boy licked his dry lips and tried to clear his throat before replying. "It only started about 3 weeks ago, Doc. First there was this tenderness and then..."

The doctor interrupted, "Mind?" He nodded his head and held out his hands to grasp the breasts; and then he proceeded to inspect the surprisingly firm mounds expertly, kneading each in turn. The boy jerked at the first contact and then held himself rigid, the crimson blush now spilled down his chest. The aureole, extending over a full third of the breast darkened as the nipples themselves began to respond to the doctor's touch. The nipples increased in articulation, swelling into sharp, well defined points that forced the round hills into more pear-like shapes.

"Mr. Lewis, I don't know who put you up to this? These..." And then he paused as if to give emphasis to what he was going to say. "These BREASTS did NOT develop over the last few weeks. Trust me. A condition like yours takes years to mature. Probably started when you were in Middle School- RIGHT? They probably made your High School years a real Hell, and for that, I am truly sorry for you. Now if you had provided the results of a complete physical, as recommended by the University when you matriculated..." The doctor pulled himself up. Obviously the physical exam was concluded. "The University has no LEGAL responsibility for unreported conditions that existed prior to your tenure at this institution. I'm sorry, Son," he said in a cold voice, "in my expert opinion, this is a chronic condition that would best be served by having your family doctor..., ah, treat you. If deemed appropriate, your doctor might perform a simple mastectomy." And the doctor shrugged his shoulders as if to say "Who knows.", "that might take care of your immediate problem." And with that, the good doctor closed his bag and left the examination room.

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Nineteen year old Theodore Lewis pushed his way out of the Student Clinic and into the cold February morning. He hadn't been this close to crying since his Dad's death nearly four years ago. The doctor had acted as if suddenly having breasts erupt on your chest was absolutely nothing - no big deal. Try to be a normal nineteen year old living in the confines of a Freshman Dormitory with tits that seemed to grow larger and larger every day! What would happen to him when he could no longer hide them, which seemed to be soon.

Ted balled his hands into fists as the rage hit him. "Damn it all he didn't believe me, he all but called me a liar." The Doc had been a real prick! Prick! "PRICK!" The last thought he inadvertently vocalized. The word evoked a snicker from a passing coed.

Worst of all, Ted concluded, he was scared. He began blinking back tears. He needed to know what was happening to him and why. He had to see a real doctor, somehow, but where would he get the money? Family doctor? Joke! When Dad died, there had been no health insurance and little enough money. Now Mom was trying to keep body and soul going on little more than social security and odd jobs... and his lit-

tle brothers. If it wasn't for the scholarship, summer work and Dr. Primbrook, he wouldn't be here at the University.

Instead of going into the Humanities Building, with most of the other Freshman at that hour on Friday, Ted decided to cut the required 101 History course. One less freshman, out of 1500, wouldn't be noticed. The massive hall would become a steam bath in a few minutes in spite of the frigid air outside. Besides, his floor in the dorm should be empty. Ted couldn't remember the last time that he had been able to take a shower. Even before these things grew to noticeable size, the nipples had changed from penny sized brown knobs to pink caps the size of silver dollars. Not something any sex crazed frosh would notice... yeah, RIGHT!

As Ted entered the upper wing of the hall, he held his breath as he listened for signs of occupation. Sweeping down the corridor, he scanned each door in passing for any sign of life - all was quiet. Finally having checked out the shower room, he entered his room and quickly undressed. A terry cloth robe covered his nakedness for the flight down the hall. Now poised at his still closed door he made one last attempt to ascertain that the hall was empty. Although the robe covered his breasts, his cleavage... "What a bizarre image," he thought as he looked down... HIS cleavage. Finally, pulling the robe tight around his neck he grabbed a towel and sprinted for the shower.

It's a fact of physics that one cannot maintain an effective watch while taking a shower. The roar of the water bounding off the various surfaces alone would negate any ability to hear someone approaching and, when coupled with steam and soap in the eyes.... Ted had no chance at all that day. One moment he was alone and the next, Norm Haver, an upper classman, was standing there, just staring at his tits. Ted choked back a scream and turned his back to the unwanted visitor. Too late! Oh God, what now?

But when he had finally found the courage to face the man, only steam stood in the doorway. He was gone! Maybe he hadn't seen... Ted didn't bother to dry off but rather wrapped himself in his robe and ran back to his room.

For a few seconds, he just stood there dripping wet with his back against the door listening. No Norm, no calls or laughter or jeers. His world hadn't ended. Maybe that University Doc was right; maybe it's not such a big deal to have boobs.

He unfastened the belt and let the robe drop to the floor. It wasn't just his breasts that had marred the image reflected back from the mirror on the wall. Ted had been losing the muscles that he had acquired last summer while working construction. His arms and shoulders were now slimmer than they had been all through high school. In contrast, his thighs were rounder, fatter than ever before. And as he half turned, his hips and ass were the same. He'd have to start working out again, somehow. He scowled at the thought of being seen like this in the men's locker room.

No way! He needed medical help first but where would he get the money? Ted groaned as he realized just how overwhelmed he really was by what was happening to him.

Once more he thought of calling home. Mama had always been there when he needed her. One call from him and she would pack up Danny and little Albert and

drive the 270 miles to Athens. Yeah, across slippery treacherous roads, arriving late in the night to calm her first born, now the man of the family. Ha! Some man!

"Oh, Mama, I really need you. No! She's counting on ME. This is my problem and I'll damn well find a way out of it on my own." Once again, the tears welled up in Ted's eyes. "I'm getting to be a regular cry baby," he thought as he began to get dressed.

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Silvia couldn't wait to tell her friends what she'd heard at the Student Union. "Girls!" she called out as she swept through the door, "have I got something JUICY!"

All three girls groaned in mock dismay. "Silvia dear!" The upper- class woman and nominal leader of the group replied, "Do tell, what dark truths lie waiting for our knowing?" Silvia was an accomplished gossip.

"It concerns one of our own," she said mysteriously, looking from face to face so as to stretch out the suspense. Finally she focused upon Jill.

"Me? What?" She shrugged her shoulders. "I have nothing to hide. My life's about as boring as..."

"As your boy friend?" Silvia interrupted. "You're dating one Theodore Lewis, right?"

"Nothing serious, but yeah. Ted's a pretty nice guy. Sweet, thoughtful, all those things your boy friends aren't, Silvia!" she shot back.

"Well, I take it you haven't slept with him lately."

"It's none of your business, one way or the other!"

"Hey! Don't bite my head off. I'm just saying that it's obvious that you haven't."

"What's that crack s'posed to mean anyhow?"

"Geeze, this is just too good to spill. I'm not talking."

"Silvia!" ordered the upper-class woman, "you come in here all hot to schlep some sludge and now THIS! Is this something Jill NEEDS to know? I mean, does this dude have AIDS or something?"

"He's a pervert! There, it's said. According to Norm Haver, he's as queer as a three dollar bill."

"NO WAY! Ted's not!" Jill stormed out of the room with tears streaming down her cheeks.

Silvia yelled after her, "The PERVERT was caught in the shower wearing a set of FALSIES!"

"Christ, Silvia! Leave her alone."

Silvia continued in a softer voice, almost a whisper. "Norm said that it looked like Ted had shaved his whole body before putting on the fake bosom."

"How'd he know they're fake?" one of the girls queried. Knowing looks then sprang from face to face.

"I always knew there was something queer about him," interjected the redhead. "He's got lashes..."

“Yeah! That you could die for.”

“Do you think he's like those guys we saw in Cleveland?”

“Oh! You mean the ones in that disgusting club?”

“Hey, Helen, do ya think Jill could get him to dress up for us.” “Ugh!” groaned the redhead, but then she started to giggle.

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Jill had wanted to go to the heated pool under the gym. Ted squelched that idea immediately. As much as he would have liked to spend the evening with her in a skimpy swim suit, given his present condition that would end whatever chance he had of keeping his girl. Eventually they met in the library. “Chemistry midterm,” he told her. Ted just didn't notice how stiff and uncomfortable she appeared; he was too self consumed for that.

About 9:30 she whispered in his ear, “Come on Ted, lets take a break.”

Standing in the icy wind that surged up the library steps and around them, Ted said through clenched teeth, “Where?”

“My room. We can sneak in through the service entry. My roomie's gone home for the weekend.” She took hold of his coat collar and tugged his face over to hers. She kissed him, tentatively at first. After several more kisses, each more passionate than the previous one, she pulled back. “You do want me, don't you? Ted?” She masked the growing suspicion she was feeling. His kisses felt wooden, unresponsive. “Could it really be true? If so what could have caused him to change? Me?” she wondered.

The way she phrased it, how could he say no. Do you want me. Hell yes, he wanted her. But not this way. He was trapped. He'd have to tell her or worse yet, show her what was happening to him. Maybe she would understand. Maybe he could find a way out of the situation he was in. He nuzzled her neck and whispered, “Yes, of course I want you.”

All too quickly he was safely in her room. Safety, of course, was a relative term. He wanted nothing more than to be with her. To have her, naked in his arms, like the last time they had made love. But that last time was just after Christmas break, before the breasts began to 'seriously' erupt from his chest. He was thinking furiously of how he might have her and yet, somehow avoid exposing himself. And the idea of simply showing her what had happened to him since the last time they made love, turned his guts to water.

She started to get undressed. He had to stop that at least for the moment. In nearly one motion he shut off the light and pulled her down on to the bed. She started to complain. She tried to finish undressing but he couldn't have that. No! He pushed her skirt up and pulled her pants down. Faking more passion than he actually possessed and hiding more fear than she could know he had, he managed to climb on top of her while still fully dressed.

“Theodore! Slow down! C'mon, sweetheart, we have all night.”

She showed uncommon resolve that night to have things her way. Ted, of course did not know that she had at least some suspicions; that this wasn't just a chance to

make love but to convince herself that what had been said about her boy friend was an ugly lie. She broke free and stood up. Ted heard her removing her clothes in the quiet dark of the dorm room and his heart fell. Finally, he heard the unsnapping of her bra. "C'mon, Ted, don't just sit there like a lump." She reached over to begin to unbutton his shirt. "What's this?" Her hand brushed against the bandage around his chest.

"Poison Oak?" he said in a voice made dry by his fear.

"Poison Oak? This time of year? No way, Jose."

"Leave it be!" his voice rose as she continued to pull at the bandage. "No!" he exclaimed when she persisted.

"I want to see." All humor was gone from her voice. "Theodore, you're hiding something from me." Now she sounded more stressed. "Ted! What's wrong with you?"

He tried to speak but nothing came out. His uncertainty boiled into alarm. This was a moment of truth and he couldn't cut it. He wanted to be anywhere but HERE. Abruptly he fled her room. Throwing himself out the utility door into the dark alley and the cold winter night, he began to run.

"Ted!" she called out after him, her voice cutting through the crisp night air. "Come back!"

Chapter 2

He had planned to go straight back to his room. On a Friday night the dorm would be empty. His room would offer a refuge, a dark calm in which to hide for a few hours. Until, of course, the beer swollen Freshman returned from the bars. What mischief might be stirred by too much alcohol and rumors? Rumors indeed! Had the upper-classman really not seen anything? The image of the guy's gaping mouth as he stared at the boobs said: EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THEODORE! Would they pull his clothes from his body, and worse? It could be a long and bitter night. And then there was Jill! She'd be on the phone before he hit the door. And knowing Jill like he did, she wouldn't let go until he'd told her everything. He wasn't ready for the third degree he would get from her. He was equally certain that he wasn't ready to tell her the truth either. With luck and a little money, a short trip up to Columbus and "whack!" Good-bye, little problems!

Like the University Doc had said, "It's no big deal." How much could something like that cost? A few hundred, a thousand? Jeeze, from where Ted stood, it might as well have been a million bucks!

At 19, there's only 3.2 beer, at least wise in the student bars downtown. A couple blocks north of Main though, there were some Townie bars where a man could get a real drink, if he were lucky. Tough little dark places, but Hell, it was only a little after 10:00 and a Friday night. As Ted's shoes crunched across the re-frozen snow heading into the darkness before the brightly lit downtown area, he felt a little like an adventurer.

All day he'd been stepped-on, things had to get better.

But the first two bars he stopped at required little more than a peek inside to convince him that he didn't want to be there. not now, not ever. The third bar, a remote hole in the wall, was much nicer, but other than the bartender, it seemed to be entirely empty. Ted would have pressed on but he was convinced that his toes would freeze off leaving him permanently crippled. He squared his shoulders and entered.

"Scotch-on-the-rocks!" he ordered.

The bartender took one look at the boy and said, "Kid, are you twenty- one? No ID, no drink!"

Ted shrugged his shoulders and started to slip off the stool. From somewhere behind him a powerful male voice rumbled, "Nicky, I'll vouch for him."

"Sure Mr. Killingsworth. Whatever you say," quipped the bartender. He snapped some ice in a whiskey glass and began to pour, stopping only when the glass was full.

"Jeeze, thanks..."

"Killingsworth,' kid, but my friends call me Bruce." A large, powerfully built man of indeterminate age stood up from one of the booths in the rear of the room. He nodded toward the booth he had just vacated. "Join me huh?" Even before Ted had responded, Mr. Killingsworth snapped another order, "Put his drink on my tab Nicky".

"Sure, Boss."

"See, Kid, it's my place and it's my ass if the State Liquor Board decides to, ya know... don't see you University types around here much. Too bad really."

Ted was becoming increasingly uncomfortable, not because of anything the guy had done, of course. Superficially, the guy was a real pal. It was his eyes. An X-ray machine in airport security couldn't have been any more penetrating. "You're in trouble, aren't you, kid? Something's got ya by the balls. Right?"

Ted's eyes grew. What in the Hell had he gotten into here?

"Sorry, Kid." Bruce raised one massive hand as if in self defense. "None of my damned business. You came here to get off the world for a few moments, and I start grilling you. I'm sorry, and I mean it. Relax!"

And he did mean it. He turned off his X-ray eyes and he talked, just enough to keep things pleasant. A little later he and Ted played a little 8 ball, all the while he kept feeding whiskey to the boy.

"Sure is hot in here," slurred Ted.

"No wonder, Kid. Take off your jacket and stay awhile."

Still later, shortly after Ted removed his bulky sweater, "Kid? What you got under that shirt? You hurt, or something?" Now, even Bruce was slurring his speech a bit.

"Hurt?" giggled Ted. "Destroyed is more like it. What I got here is gonna fuck up everything. My life, my career, everything."

"Shit..." slurred Bruce, "ain't nothin' that bad. Except cancer maybe." "Worst dan dat, Brucie, yep."

"Let me see, Kid?"

"Can't! Too embar... embarr... shit!" He started to unbutton his shirt, then realized where he was and stopped.

"Nicky, we're done for the night. Lock the door on the way out. I'll close."

"Sure, Boss."

Minutes later the front door clanked shut. "C'mon, kid, we're alone now. Nobody will bother us. Show me what's been bothering you so much."

In spite of all the booze he had consumed over the last several hours, the request still made him nervous. Ted finished unbuttoning his shirt and took it off. And then he began to remove the bandage around his chest. "There!" he said as he set them free.

The breasts caught Bruce's eyes. "Beautiful!" He cooed. With one of his massive ham-like hands he reached out and cupped one of the newly revealed mammaries. After a moments pause, the second hand went out and gently touched Ted's chin. "You're beautiful. All of you, Kid." Before Ted could respond in any fashion, Bruce kissed him fully on the lips.

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Mama was in the kitchen. Ted could hear the clatter of dishes and smell the delightful odor of breakfast in the making. As he snuggled deeper into the warmth of the bed sheets, his sleep clogged brain finally began to grapple with the numerous incon-

sistencies. Mama was hundreds of miles away and the bed sheets! The nylon-satiny, clinging textures delighted his naked skin. "Oh, my God!"

He sat up in the bed. A black satin sheet clung, for the briefest moment, to his shoulders before sliding down his chest. Like a bad dream, a pair of breasts, HIS breasts, still bobbing and weaving from his abrupt movement, were revealed. Blue-black marks, "love bites," now decorated one of them and several other "bites" became evident as the sheet completed it's fall.

Nothing!

He looked for and found absolutely NOTHING in his memory of last night. The big man had touched his breast and then kissed him. That was all he could remember or maybe all that he wanted to remember! He had never felt so completely vulnerable as he did at that instant. He had obviously been used sexually by that man. Had he changed that much in the last few weeks that he would seek out sex with men? Suddenly the bedroom door opened, Bruce what's-his-name??? was carrying a tray into the room. The welcome odor of fresh brewed coffee and breakfast came in with him.

"Kid! Hell of a night, what? I wasn't sure you were ever going to wake up." He stopped when he noticed the drawn, scared look on the boy's face. "Hey, it's me, Bruce, Bruce Killingworth! Remember? No problemo!" And he started to chuckle as if reliving a funny experience.

Ted didn't laugh. In fact he looked even more afraid than before. "Where am I?" His voice had a whiny sound as if hovering on the verge of tears.

"Damn it, Kid, don't you remember anything? My house, of course! You don't remember telling me how frustrated, ah, horny you were, what with your girl getting you all juiced-up and then... Shit, Boy, you had a great time last night! Never had your tits sucked before, remember... No?"

"Sorry, Mr. ah..."

"Christ all mighty, Boy. It's me, your own Bruciel!"

The big man sat down rather heavily on the side of the bed. A big ham sized hand cupped and gently squeezed one of Ted's exposed breasts. The hand was warm and the touch gentle. Ted stared but didn't reject the gesture.

Still looking down at the hand which now held his breast in a possessive manner, Ted bit his lower lip before speaking. "I'm very confused, about a lot of things, Mr. Killingworth." With a shrug of his shoulders, "What with these..." and he touched the other breast. "It's not JUST these." His voice became firmer, "everything I am is, ah, becoming more feminine. Look, I don't even need to shave! And your hand on my breast, well it feels, ah, nice, kind of. And it's all driving me NUTS! Thanks for everything, ya know, whatever? But please, I gotta get back to the dorm or something."

Bruce looked more than a little hurt, but he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Get dressed and I'll drive you over. No big deal. It's just a couple of minutes away."

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Bruce was quiet most of the way back to the dorm. Finally he put one hand on the boy's leg. "I think you're special, you got to believe me on this one, Ted. Something

about you just puts a surge in me, see, makes my prick scream for more of your sweet tush.” The big man gripped Ted's leg tightly. “I could really fall for you.” His voice had grown husky.

For a moment, a mercenary thought flashed in Ted's mind. He needed money. Money to get real medical help, but the idea of “hitting up” this one night stand... Yeah, he could afford it, Ted was sure, but Ted's self image was already in tatters.

“Hey Mister, could you like give me a thousand or so so's I can have these jugs removed?” Nah! No way! Besides not really knowing the guy, how much more entangled did he want to become with him.

“I mean,” Ted thought, “he's GAY, RIGHT!”

The car pulled up in front of the dorm. As if he didn't already have enough trouble, Ted realized that in a small town like this, probably half the world already knew that he was returning home from an all-nighter escorted by a known fag. And then, OH GOD! It was obvious that the guy didn't want to leave. Everyone would see them together!

“Ted?” Bruce called from the open car window, “if you need me for anything, just anything, whistle. You got me? Hey, fellow, drinks are on the house in my place, ya hear? Always!” But he continued to just sit there looking at the boy. Some sign, any sign that the boy might give, but none was forthcoming. And then, all too slowly, the white Ford pulled away.

It was almost noon and the midday sun blazed. In spite of the fact that last night had been in the 20's, in true Midwestern fashion, traces of last week's snow were all but gone and the temperature was now in the low 60s. Students were walking about, enjoying the sun in T-shirts and shorts. Ted felt even more deviant standing there in his heavy coat. He tried to picture himself, right now in shorts and T-shirt. Wouldn't it be a sight? A pair of pointed mounds tenting and stretching the thin fabric of the front of his shirt. Jeeze, he always liked to watch them bounce and sway, but definitely on someone else. “Crap!” he grumped out loud.

Ted, in the events of the last few hours, had forgotten just how much he still had to face. His mail box was filled with messages, mostly from Jill. She must have continued to call until the switch board closed last night. And he realized, oh my God, here was a message from Dr. Primbrook. Christ! He had forgotten today was Saturday! And what? A message from the Dorm Resident Counselor?

He was still holding the fistful of unread messages when he got to his room. On his door, written in huge block letters, obviously fresh for some of the magic marker came off on his hand, the word FAG!!!

Inside the room looked strangely empty. Both his roommates and all their things were gone! Even their beds. The room, normally cramped, now suddenly was spacious. Other than a few stray dust balls and minor litter, it was WONDERFUL! “The first good thing that has happened in a long while,” thought Ted. The drain of keeping his secret hidden, day in and day out, in the close confines of this room with two roommates had been more wearing than he had even been aware of when it was happening. Like a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. ALONE! He promptly removed his up-

per garments and freed his breasts from their wrappings. Now rubbing both briskly, Ted surveyed his new domain. "Free, free at last!" he called out to whomever might be within listening distance.

There was plenty of room in the closets now and, WHAT??? Hanging by it's spaghetti straps, a small, cotton sun dress. A pair of high heels, badly scuffed and somewhat broken down, lay on the closet floor. Cute! Real cute! "Of course," he thought as he now started searching through his dresser, "Where's the underwear?" Eventually he did find several panties and a bra. "Too bad," He called out in a stage whisper, "NOT MY SIZE!" Ted felt all used up, at his limit. Trembling he sat on the edge of his bed. Dirty. He felt dirty. Probably from what he had done last night. Probably from the announcement on his door. It was true, wasn't it? He thought about the old saying, "if it walks like a duck, etc., etc. Well he sure looked like a fag and last night he'd sure acted like one. There was only one conclusion, he was a duck! He sat there for a few seconds staring out the window at the carefree couples walking hand in hand across the commons. The false spring sun holding back, for a few hours, the legitimate winter frost. Like today's sun, this quiet moment would not hold back very long the dreadful, nasty reality of Ted's life. He was suddenly different from everyone else. The rules had changed overnight. Ted was no longer a member of the majority, but a visible party of a much maligned and often helpless minority, feminine men.

It's OK to be a man or a woman. Hell, it's even OK to be a mannish woman. But a feminine man! A woman can have a mustache and be flat chested and that would be OK. But a man with well formed breasts? And Ted had to admit that more was happening to him than just developing breasts. His silhouette, for one thing, was changing gradually. Although he couldn't be sure, his hips appeared to be widening and his limbs, absolutely feminine... And at that moment, something inside him snapped.

He began flinging items from his dresser until he found what he wanted, a pair of cuts-off he hadn't worn since last fall, and a new, soft white T-shirt. He laid them side by side on the bed, along with the much abused high heels from the closet floor. The cafeteria would still be serving for another hour on Saturday and he was hungry. But first, a scalding hot shower. Yeah! Here! Now! It's their problem, not mine any longer. I'm no longer going to wrap my chest and mask my shape! Theodore Lewis was coming out fighting!

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Grace, from across the hall burst into Jill's room. "Jill, you wouldn't believe what I just saw. It was so GROSS!" The tiny brunette was breathing heavily from having run clear across The Commons. She stopped to get her breath before continuing. In a machine-gun burst she continued, "This girl came into the cafeteria wearing, you know, short shorts and a T-shirt tied in the middle, you know like a halter top. I mean, from where I was seated, nothing outrageous and for a Saturday, well who cares, RIGHT? You could see something was up by the way all the guys, down front, were checking out her top. But anyhow, someone in the serving line makes a problem and the word gets out. Like they wouldn't serve her 'cause she got no bra. WELL! I mean, we've been here and done that, like who cares whether or not she's got one... except the guys of course. So a bunch of us get up to storm the castle, so to speak, you know stand shoulder to shoulder... well! I can't see her face now or nothing, not with every-

one in the place up front by now, but I heard her say, I mean I knew it was true as soon as she spoke.”

“What?” Jill interrupted.

“HE! He says well that rule don't apply to him 'cause he's a guy, ya know. Well, I mean, like everyone, and I mean everyone, began to snicker. You know like some kind of frat prank. Boy did they get THEM that time. But then it started getting real ugly. Like it was no prank. The guy says like these are his BREASTS! Sick! No joke! Well, you could've dropped a pin in that place and heard it in Columbus! The crowd started breaking up like someone had let a trash fart. And then...”

“Don't tell me, it was Ted. Right?”

“Jeeze, how'd'ya know?” She looked embarrassed for a moment. “I guess you would, wouldn't you?”

Only seconds after Grace left and while Jill was on the phone trying yet again to contact Ted she heard her name spoken softly, “Jill?”

For several moments she just stared at the figure in the doorway. “How'd you get in?” she whispered. She kept her eyes fixed on Ted's eyes. She was afraid of what she would see if she looked down at his body.

He stepped in and shut the door behind him. “Walked in, right through the main lounge. Never done that before. I guess it's one of the benefits of being like THIS! Jill we got to talk. You must think I'm some kind of a monster and I'm not. Jill, I'm just me, like always.”

Now she WAS looking. Her mouth fell open in disbelief. Her worst fears had not prepared her for what she would really see. His breasts wrapped in the thin cotton T-shirt. The large, full nipples were clearly evident through the material. The way they moved... these were REAL! There was no doubt now that the unbelievable things she had heard were true! She struggled for words. “Is this really what you look like?”

“Give me a break, Jill. If I had any less on, I'd be in jail and not just on Dorm report. Here, let's get it over with.” And with a quick shrug, he pulled off the T-shirt. “This is what you wanted to see last night, and I was afraid to show you. Here, do you want to touch them? They're real all right.”

Jill turned her head away. “Put it back on, I don't want to remember you like that.”

“Remember?” Ted echoed her. “That has an ominous sound to it, 'Remember'.”

“Theodore! What do you think? I'm only human. I was attracted to you for a lot of reasons. I mean, if you'd had a terrible scar, well maybe I could deal with that. You are a sweet, warm person, that's worth a big old scar running down the middle of your face, but... Christ! Your bosom is better than mine! I'll not have a man with better looking breasts than mine. Don't you understand, Ted? Hi Mom! This is the man I'm going to marry. Don't worry, we'll flip a coin to see which one of us gets to wear your old Wedding Dress. Ted, I can't deal with this. Not now, not EVER!”

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