

# Rainbow School for Girls *Student Diaries*



## **E. B. Stevenson**



A "New Woman" Novel



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Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder. This material is intended for persons over the age of 18 only.



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# **THE RAINBOW SCHOOL FOR GIRLS: Student Diaries**

**by E.B. Stevenson**

## **One: Georgette "Gloria" McArthur, Seventh Grade, Baltimore Campus**

August 27: I have just finished my first day of school at the Rainbow School for Girls' campus in Baltimore. The view of Chesapeake Bay is just beautiful. The campus is just beautiful, celebrating the area's Colonial American heritage. It is much different from the school and the life I left behind in rural West Virginia.

I'm a twelve-year-old seventh grader who's a ward of the court in the State of West Virginia. Both of my parents are serving prison sentences. My father,

George McArthur, is serving a sentence of twenty-five years to life for production and distribution of methamphetamines. He cooked the drug out of our home outside of Beckley, in one of the poorest sections of the state. After losing his job at the coal mines when I was six years old, this was the only kind of work he could get. My mother, Renee McArthur, is serving a sentence of twenty years to life for her part in a prostitution ring operating out of Charleston.

My two brothers, George and Roger, are living with my Uncle Greg and Aunt Heidi in a suburb of Frankfurt, Germany. I got the nickname "Gloria" from a 1980 movie about a woman bent on revenge. I was very tough, like the title character in that movie. None of my aunts and uncles would take me in, since I was very much a tomboy. I wore blue jeans and T-shirts instead of the fashions most girls wear. I often got into trouble at school; I was suspended for a week for pushing a special needs boy down at the school I attended in Beckley while I was in the fifth grade, just days before our place was busted by federal authorities. Our mother was busted in a sting operation just as I was coming off that suspension.

Two weeks before, on August 13, I faced a judge in Charleston to hear the decision on my case. "Georgette Marie McArthur, you have shown that you have behaved in a very unfeminine manner while you've been living with your Uncle Gus in Beckley. Since he is your only relative in West Virginia, and that he can't take you in because of his situation resulting from being injured in a mining accident, he has asked that you become a ward of the court. He also requested that you be put in a school that will teach you to be a proper young lady. It is the decision of this court that you be made a ward of the court, sending you to The Rainbow School for Girls in Baltimore, Maryland. There, you will not only learn the

academics you need, but also be taught in the proper deportment and manners for a member of the feminine persuasion. We have been able to get you in for the fall semester; the academic year begins two weeks from today. You are to report to the school for seventh grade orientation on August 23 at noon. You will be at the school until you graduate from high school," the judge explained.

It was around seven o'clock on the morning of August 23 that a car from the school parked in front of my uncle's house to take me to Baltimore. I packed my clothes and worldly goods in two bags. I decided to wear my navy blue T-shirt, a pair of faded blue jeans, a pair of white athletic socks and a pair of red basketball shoes. "Gloria McArthur, I'm Hazel Whitman, a guidance counselor at Rainbow. I'm here to take you to Baltimore," she informed me.

"Could I put my bags in the trunk?" I asked her.

"Sure thing," she replied.

She drove one of the cars from the school; a brand new Ford Taurus with Maryland plates, "RSFG 13". I soon found out that "RSFG" stood for The Rainbow School for Girls, and this is the thirteenth car of the fourteen-car fleet assigned to pick up new students. As we got on Interstate 64, Hazel asked me: "What brings you to Rainbow?"

"I'm a ward of the court here in West Virginia. I've been sent to your school by court order," I replied before I produced a copy of the court order.

"We get nearly forty percent of our students via court order. Most of the students we get due to court orders come from Maryland and Virginia, but we also get quite a few from West Virginia. We also get wards of the court from all areas of Pennsylvania except the

northwest part and northeast corner of the state, as well as southern New Jersey, the eastern part of North Carolina, the northeastern part of South Carolina, southeastern Ohio, eastern Kentucky and northeastern Tennessee. For example, the students from northwest Pennsylvania, including Erie, are sent to our campus in Chicago. Those from places like Allentown and Bethlehem are sent to our campus on Long Island. Our home campus is in San Francisco, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In addition to Baltimore, Long Island, Chicago and San Francisco, we also have urban campuses in Los Angeles, Seattle and Tampa Bay, as well as our Rocky Mountain campus in Casper, Wyoming, our Midwest campus in Dittmer, Missouri, forty-five minutes from St. Louis, and our North Georgia campus in the mountains, an hour north of Atlanta,” she explained.

“What’s the makeup of the student body?” I asked her.

“At this campus, we have 500 students. Forty-five percent of those, or 225 students, are wards of the court, like you. They have been removed from abusive situations, have had both parents incarcerated, have relatives who are unable to care for them and provide them a decent education, or are sent from unhealthy environments at home. Fifty-five percent of our student body, or 275 students, are transgender. They are at various stages of transitioning from boys to girls. About half of this year’s seventh graders are transgender girls. Some have been sent here by the courts, but most are referred to by a parent, psychologist, psychiatrist or a social worker. Many start their transitional periods in seventh grade; some start transitioning from boys to girls later on. Many have gender reassignment surgery during their stay at Rainbow; only a handful wait until they graduate from high school before having their operations,” she explained.

“Exactly what brings a transgender girl to your school?”

“Gloria, many are looking for a safe place to learn. They are bullied in public schools in their hometown because of their effeminate ways. Some have been assaulted by their classmates. These girls have what professionals call gender identity disorder. They may have male bodies, but strongly identify as female. They go through hormone replacement therapy. The male hormones are replaced with female hormones, in which the outward feminine features develop. The person will develop breasts, and have more feminine hips and buttocks. At our school, they are also taught the finer points of being girls. For at least a year, these young ladies go through what is known as the Real Life Test, in which they live, dress and go to school full-time as girls. After two years of living full-time as girls, and they have demonstrated that there is no doubt that they can adjust to life as girls, they have what is called gender reassignment surgery. This is where the male genitals are removed, and female genitals created.”

“To some, it may sound gross. I’ll get used to this as time goes on.”

“Since you have shown very tomboyish behavior, you will also be taught the finer points of feminine behavior and deportment. I don’t know how long it’s been since you’ve worn a skirt, but wearing a skirt is required. Our skirts are plaid with emphasis on the blues and greens. Also part of the uniform is a white blouse, a pair of black flats or pumps, depending on your height, and, since you are a seventh grader, a pair of white knee-high socks. Socks are required for seventh and eighth graders; they are optional for the high school girls, who can wear nylon stockings or pantyhose. We also have white thermal tights for those cold days. All of the uniforms will be issued by

the school; five uniforms will be issued to you. You will also be learning to do your household chores, such as doing the laundry, cleaning your dorm rooms and watching out for your roommates.”

“How many people will I be sharing a room with?”

“You will be sharing a room with three other girls; at least one of those will be a transgender girl. Each dorm room has two bedrooms and two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a combination dining and living room. Your roommates will become your best friends. All of your roommates will be in the same grade as you are.”

“This will be a new experience.”

When I arrived at the school, I was shown to the visitors’ quarters by Hazel. “The blonde in the red dress is the one you go to; her name is Olivia. She will get your paperwork processed,” she told me.

I walked over to the desk, and showed my paperwork. “Miss McArthur, welcome to Rainbow. I’m Olivia Jones; I’m one of the guidance counselors; I handle our students who are wards of the court,” she told me.

“I’m glad to be here,” I said.

“I’d take it you left a poverty-stricken town in West Virginia. You must have left a very bad situation there,” Olivia added.

“My Uncle Gus isn’t able to take care of me because of his health. Both of my parents are in jail.”

“What are your parents incarcerated for?”



“My father is in prison for the manufacture and distribution of meth; my mother is behind bars for her part in a prostitution ring in Charleston.”

While she processed my paperwork, she got the key to a room in the visitors' quarters. “Is this traditional for the incoming seventh graders?” I asked her.

“Incoming seventh graders stay in these quarters the first night; they're assigned their permanent quarters after orientation,” she replied.

After she finished processing my paperwork, she said: “Gloria, you're in Room 227; it's on the second floor.” She also gave me several pamphlets and booklets to read. “Each of these books details our student policies, rights and responsibilities and our academic policies. Read these publications before orientation tomorrow morning at ten o'clock,” she added before calling a student worker to the desk.

The student who came to the desk to show me to my temporary quarters was a tall blonde girl. “Gloria McArthur, I'm Fawn McKenzie; I'm a junior at Rainbow,” she said to me.

“It's a pleasure to meet you,” I told her.

“Where do you come from?” she then asked.

“I'm from a rural area near Beckley, West Virginia. I'm a ward of the court,” I replied.

“Were you born male or female?”

“I was born female. I consider myself a tomboy.”

“I began life as a boy. My name was Faron when I was born; I spent the first twelve years of my life in Staunton, Virginia. From the time I was three years

old, I knew I should have been a girl. I first dressed as a girl when I was four; I put on a white flower girl's dress that my sister, Fran, wore when she was four years old. By the time I was ten years old, I was going to school as Faron, and living at home as Fawn, the girl I felt I should have been to begin with. I was picked on in school because of my feminine ways. Finally, when I finished sixth grade, I told my parents and sister I wanted to become a girl. With the help of my therapist, I entered this school in seventh grade, where I began living, dressing and going to school full-time as a girl. My parents helped me with the legal name change from Faron James McKenzie to Fawn Jennifer McKenzie. After I finished the eighth grade, my mother took me to Philadelphia for gender reassignment surgery. I decided to stay and help my transgender sisters adjust to life as girls. I'm sure there will be someone who will help you learn the finer points of being a girl."

"I'll be looking forward to being a more proper girl. I'll definitely need to be more feminine than I am now."

When I got into my temporary quarters, Fawn helped me with my bags. "If you need anything, call the front desk," she told me before I crashed on the bed and got a nap before reading the material. Just as I was reading the material, my lunch was delivered: a ham sandwich with potato chips and a pitcher of unsweetened iced tea. I spent the whole afternoon looking over the material before my dinner was delivered around six o'clock. I was served baked chicken and salad. I continued to read over the material before I turned on the television set in my room to watch the news; I fell asleep around eleven-thirty.

I got up at approximately eight-thirty the next morning; I decided to wear my pink polo shirt, a pair of blue jeans, a pair of ankle-high socks and a pair of

white sneakers. I had my bags packed before I left the room; I went downstairs to the guests' dining room to have a donut and a glass of milk before I went to the auditorium for new student orientation. The majority of the students coming in were seventh graders, although there were quite a few high school freshmen in this group. At ten o'clock, a blonde-haired woman of medium height and average build walked on the stage. She was wearing a paisley print summer dress and a pair of white sandals.

"Good morning ladies, I'm Daphne Tremaine. I'm the Headmistress. I'd like to welcome you new students to The Rainbow School for Girls' Baltimore campus, also known as Rainbow-Baltimore. We're glad you are joining us for an educational experience like no other. I've been the Headmistress here for the last three years; before that, I taught Social Studies at Rainbow's campuses in Chicago, St. Louis and Tampa Bay before coming here to Baltimore. I live in Annapolis with my husband, John, a professor of History at the Naval Academy, and our daughters, Julie, seventeen years old, and Danielle, thirteen years old. I hold Bachelor's degrees in Social Work and History from Harvard, and a Master's degree in Education Administration from Northwestern University," she informed us.

The first question she asked was what grades we were in; nearly sixty percent of the hands that went up were seventh graders, of which I am one. The second largest group to raise their hands was the high school freshmen, making up about one-third of the new students. A few of the hands that went up were from the eighth graders; only one high school sophomore raised her hand.

The next question was which states we were from. Half of the students raised their hands when asked if they were from Maryland. A quarter of the students

were from Virginia, with smaller numbers from Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina and Ohio. I was one of only two girls from West Virginia who raised their hands.

When she asked which students are wards of the court, forty percent of the group had their hands raised, including me. The other girl from West Virginia had her hand up. The last question was which ones were born male, and which ones were born female. I was clearly in the minority; two thirds of the girls who raised their hands were born male. After going over the rules, regulations, rights and responsibilities, I went to be measured for my school uniform. I was issued seven red plaid skirts, a similar number of white blouses, red leggings, white stockings, white panties and bras, black and red pumps, white sneakers, and white half and full slippers. After getting our school uniforms, I stood in line for the key to my dorm room and my class schedule. I got a room in Dormitory One; the number on the key ring was 1327. I would be on the third floor of the four-story building, with a room facing Chesapeake Bay.

The other girl from West Virginia was waiting for me. She was fourteen years old, five-three with long blonde hair, a slender build and wearing a red body suit, blue denim skirt and a pair of red flats. "Gloria McArthur?" she asked me.

"I'm Gloria McArthur," I replied.

"I'm Ruth Stevens; I've got a key to Room 1327," she added."

"I also have a key to that same room," I added before I asked her what part of West Virginia she came from.

“I’m originally from Wheeling. It’s in the far northern part of the state, within ten minutes of both Ohio and Pennsylvania.”

“I come from Beckley, in the southern part of the state. So many people work in coal mining there.”

“How did you become a ward of the court?”

“My parents are both in prison, Ruth. My father is in prison for manufacturing, possession and sale of methamphetamines; my mother is in prison for her part in a prostitution ring. The court sent me here”

“My mother is an alcoholic, Gloria. She’s right now at a rehab facility near Altoona. My father is living in Germany with his present wife. He is very good about paying child support. Since I have no other relatives nearby, the court sent me here; my father went along with the decision.”

“Were you born a boy or a girl?”

“I was born a girl. I’ve shown some aggressive tendencies.”

“I was also born a girl; I’m free to admit I’m a tom-boy.”

Just before Ruth and I entered the building, another one of our roommates met up with us. Thirteen years old, she’s five-four with shoulder-length red hair, wearing a mauve summer dress and a pair of white flats. “My key is for Room 1327. Are you my roommates?” she asked us.

“I’m Gloria McArthur,” I replied.

“I’m Ruth Stevens,” Ruth added.

“I’m Tiffany Wenzel. I’m an eighth grader from Portsmouth, Ohio,” she added.

“Gloria and I are both West Virginia girls.”

“I’m from Beckley; Ruth hails from Wheeling.”

“Were you both born girls?” Tiffany asked us.

“I was born a girl. I displayed some aggressive tendencies when I was in regular school in Wheeling,” Ruth replied.

“I was also born a girl; I’m a tomboy,” I added.

“I was born a boy. Until I finished the sixth grade, I was known as Timothy, or Timmy for short. I knew I should have been a girl from the time I was two and a half years old. I have two older sisters who dressed me up in their old dresses. I was held back a year in fourth grade because of my gender identity disorder; I finally told my family of my decision last spring. I was referred here by my therapist; I plan to transition to a girl while I’m here, and hopefully have my operation when I finish the eighth grade,” Tiffany explained.

“We’re glad you’re here, Tiffany,” Ruth said with a smile.

“We’ll be here for you,” I added.

“Do we have to wait for another person?” Ruth asked.

“We have one more person to wait for. We went through the line to be fitted for our school uniforms,” Tiffany replied.