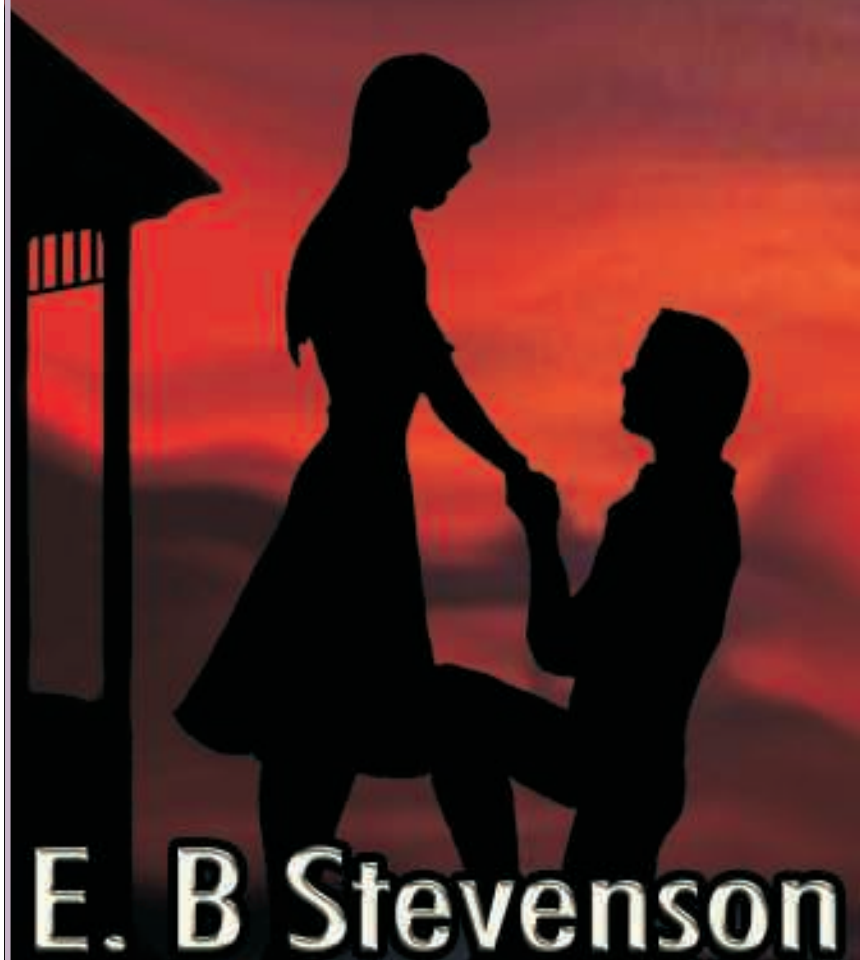


# Getting Back at the Guys



**E. B Stevenson**



A "Young Adult TV" Novel



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# GETTING BACK AT THE GUYS

By E.B. Stevenson

## One

It has been six years since my older brother, Steve, and older sister, Dottie, helped send two girls named Missy Richards and Tammy Martin, to prison. Forced crossdressing had become a thing of the past; the laws passed as a result of the discipline problems brought out by their bizarre behavior have scared many folks into stopping this practice.

It was the early part of January; I had just returned to classes at Central High School after the holiday break. I'm now a junior; my younger sister Sarah is a freshman at Central. My older sister Jennie graduated the previous spring; she's now a freshman at State University, planning to study to be a teacher. Steve is a senior at State, majoring in journalism. Over the Christmas holiday, he asked his

longtime girlfriend, Brittany Zachary, for her hand in marriage. Dottie had just finished law school and was studying for the state bar exam while working as a reserve police officer. She was sharing an apartment in a complex three blocks south of the house with Dina Shelton, now a police officer. Eric had joined the Diplomatic Corps after graduating from college; he was assigned to the embassy in Canberra, Australia, where he is living with his wife, Elizabeth, and their daughter, Sophie. Jim is now a Social Studies teacher at South High, his wife, Carolyn, teaches at West Central Alternative High.

I was entering my second hour Current Events class when I was stopped at the door by my girlfriend, Lori Portman. She's also a junior, five-seven with an average build and long medium brown hair. "Greg, did you hear the latest?" she asked me.

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

"Our class is having an assembly in the auditorium during fifth hour," she replied.

"I wonder what the topic will be this time."

"The principals are keeping it hush-hush."

"I don't think Mr. Fielding will talk about it in today's class; we're focused on what's going on in Washington."

Lori's second hour English class, with Mrs. Laird, was across the hall from my Current Events class. Two hours later, I would be in Mrs. Laird's American Literature class. When the class broke for lunch around noon, I met up with my friends. I hung around with a group of five boys. Eric Bales is my best friend; I've known him since kindergarten. He was a girl magnet through middle school, but the fe-

male attention he received dropped off dramatically once we entered high school. He's somewhat heavy set with short light brown hair; at six feet tall, he was the second tallest of the group. I was the tallest at six-one with a larger than average build and wearing a crew cut. Jack Pounds is a sophomore; he started hanging with us while Eric and I were in first grade. He's five-eight, with a slender build and shoulder-length blonde hair. Keith Pohl is also a sophomore; he's five-nine with a slender build and short black hair; he joined our group when I started my sophomore year of high school. Nathan Forester is a junior; he started hanging around me and Eric when we were in third grade. He's the shortest of our group at five-six with a slender build and shoulder-length dark brown hair. Rounding out our group is Ronald Milton, whom we call Ron. He's a freshman, five-eleven with an average build, short red hair and wearing glasses. He had just started dating Susie Farrell, one of Sarah's best friends. All of us had girlfriends except Eric.

"What's the assembly next hour going to be about?" asked Ron.

"They're not telling. The principals and faculty are keeping it hush-hush until then," I replied.

"My guess is that it's something controversial," Nathan added.

"That's what I'm thinking, too," Eric then added.

"Have any of you been asked by your girlfriends to enter the Womanless Pageant this Friday night?" I then asked.

"Renee and I have fun doing that. She's looking to get me into her mother's wedding dress," Nathan replied.

“Angie and I also have fun doing this. Last year, she got me into her big sister Amanda’s prom dress. This year, she’s looking to put me into the bridesmaid’s dress she wore when Amanda got married last summer,” Jack added.

“I’m going to do it this for the first time this year. Jolene has been asking me since the start of the school year; she’s getting her older sister Sally’s prom dress for the event,” Keith then added.

“Lori and I discussed this; we think it’s crazy to put me in a dress,” I said.

“I’m going to be a judge in this pageant,” Eric added.

“Lori and I were judges last year; we had a lot of fun,” I told Eric.

“Which organization are they raising money for this year?” asked Nathan.

“This year’s Womanless Pageant will benefit Operation Rebekah; it’s a non-profit organization that helps provide shelter, along with health and vocational services for women escaping abusive relationships, as well as counseling and legal services for these women, as well as helping women who are pregnant out of wedlock. Lori has been volunteering at the group’s Becky’s House since eighth grade. Her older sister Lisa went through a similar situation three years ago, when she was a sophomore in high school,” I explained.

“Didn’t Burt Williams get her pregnant?” Keith asked.

“Yes, he did. He wanted to, as he put it, ‘prove his manhood’ after that episode six years ago when he

was forcibly crossdressed. When Lori told me about it the day after Lisa told the family she was pregnant, we decided to take her to Becky's House. She was able to put her child up for adoption; the little girl is now three years old, and is being raised by a lawyer in town and his gynecologist wife. Lisa was also able to get an order of protection against Burt; he was ordered to stay away from her," I told him.

"His mother died of an overdose of painkillers the day after he received the order," Ron added.

"Where is he now?" Jack asked.

"He's now in the State Psychiatric Hospital. He was committed by his wealthy older sister eighteen months ago due to post traumatic stress disorder from the forced crossdressing experience," Eric replied.

I looked at my watch, and realized I had to get back to class. "I don't know about you, but I have to get back to class," I informed them.

"We've been talking so long that we've lost all track of time, Eric suddenly remembered. We got up from our table, threw our trash out from our lunches and went back to our respective classes.

## **Two**

All of the students reported to the auditorium shortly before one o'clock in the afternoon. Normally, I would be in Mrs. Quinlan's Algebra class. On this particular cold January day, we would have a school-wide assembly. I took a seat in the middle row, next to Lori. My friends would be in the row in



back of us. I noticed television cameras in the auditorium once I walked inside. In the back row, we noticed four boys sitting together, wearing blue denim jackets, blue jeans, black T-shirts and combat boots. All four of their shirts featured Confederate flags. One had short black hair; the others had varying shades of brown hair.

“Who are those boys? They scare the living day-lights out of me!” asked a concerned Lori.

“They’ve been nothing but trouble all year. The black-haired boy is Johnny ‘Bubba’ Davis; he’s a junior. The one with chestnut brown hair is Cloyd Culpeper; he’s a senior. The one with medium brown hair is Joseph “Joe Bob” Lanier; he’s a junior. The one with light brown hair is Howard Nailor; he’s also a junior. They’re apparently part of a group of anti-LGBTQ high school students in town,” I explained.

“They’re nothing but B.N.” Eric added.

“B.N.?” Keith then asked.

“Bad news,” Jack replied.

The stage was set up with a podium and three chairs. We knew that it would be something significant. The building principal, Mr. Martino, wearing a maroon suit, navy blue pinstripe tie and brown shoes, came on stage at one o’clock. Accompanying him were a short woman with long red hair, wearing a royal blue dress and matching flats, and a tall woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, wearing a crimson red dress and matching high heels.

“Ladies and gentlemen, there is going to be a significant change here at Central High School. It is something that some of you aren’t ready for,” Mr.

Martino told us while there was some chatter among the students.

“Late last year, the courts handed down a decision that requires us to start admitting transgender students to our school instead of segregating them at West Central Alternative High School. Before they could be admitted to Central High, they had to meet the minimum academic requirements. The minimum grade point average they had to maintain for admission is a two-point-seven-five,” Mr. Martino explained as the four students sitting in the back walked out of the auditorium with angry looks on their faces. I looked back, and noticed that each of the boys had Confederate battle flags on the backs of their jackets.

They walked down the hallway toward their lockers, with the idea of heading for home. Mrs. Moore caught them turning toward the Commons. “Where are you headed, boys?” she asked them.

“Home, Mrs. Moore,” Bubba replied.

“You probably know that this assembly is mandatory,” Mrs. Moore informed him.

“We don’t think so. We don’t want any fags in this school,” Cloyd added.

“I don’t think it is right to have fairies in this school,” Joe Bob angrily added.

“Are we in trouble?” Howard asked.

“You’re in deep trouble,” Mrs. Moore informed them before she ordered them to her office.

While that exchange was going on, Mr. Martino continued: “We have brought two ladies who will give

us insight on what we're about to deal with. Dr. Katie O'Neill is one of the top youth psychologists in our town; she has several transgender youth in her practice. She's also one of the advisors for the TransGenesis Youth support group. Jennifer Westley is a leading transgender advocate in our town; she graduated ten years ago from Central High. As a man named Jason Westley, he was an honor student and participated in our annual Womanless Pageant for charity. He went on to study photographic art in Los Angeles; while in college, he came out as transgender and began the transition from man to woman. Four years ago, she completed her transformation into Jennifer. Today, she is an in-demand photographer. First, I'd like for Dr. O'Neill to explain what we're about to deal with."

Katie is the shorter of the two ladies; five-five with a slender build. "Thank you, Mr. Martino. Not many of you young folk have dealt with a classmate with Gender Identity Disorder, or GID. To put it simply, someone with this condition is in the body of one gender, but strongly identifies with the opposite gender. Such a person may be a boy, but strongly identifies as a girl, or vice versa. This condition usually starts manifesting itself at an early age; in most cases, before the patient is old enough to attend school. In my practice, most of my patients have had this condition manifest itself as early as two years of age. It may start with a boy wanting a feminine doll to play with, such as a Barbie doll, instead of more masculine toys. It may start with a boy secretly dressing in girls' clothes or a girl acting more masculine than other girls. But, this gender identity conflict becomes part of their existence. They are driven to become the opposite gender. When I entered private practice twenty years ago, it was recommended that patients with the condition must wait until the age of eighteen to begin the transition from one gender to the other. Today, some patients begin transitioning as early as first

grade, completing their transitions as early as seventh grade. I have one of my patients here today; she's now advocating for the local transgender community; I'd like to have her speak now," she explained.

Jennifer got up from her seat and walked toward the podium. At six feet tall, she is just two inches shorter than Mr. Martino. "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Jennifer Michelle Westley. When I was a student here at Central, I was known as Jason Michael Westley. When I was three years old, I first knew that I should have been a girl. I was playing with my older sister Erica's dolls instead of my older brother Elvin's building blocks. My parents couldn't figure out what was happening to me. When I was six years old, I put on one of Erica's old dresses in secret. During my school days, I presented myself as someone I wasn't: a boy. When I was a freshman here at Central, one of my classmates told me about the annual Womanless Pageant. I was thinner than most boys my age; I could easily get into Erica's dresses. I wore the gown she wore when she was Homecoming Queen fifteen years ago; I won the rhinestone tiara for the freshman class. I won three more rhinestone tiaras; I wore my mother's wedding dress in my senior year," she explained.

She paused while the audio-visual specialist put up two pictures: Jason Westley's senior portrait and a picture of Jennifer Westley in an evening gown. "The picture on the left is my senior portrait, taken ten years ago. The one on the right was taken three months ago at a charity fashion show. The journey to become the woman I knew I should have been began the day after I graduated from high school. My family had known about my feminine tendencies since I was twelve years old. My parents and older siblings sat down in the living room early that evening; my kid brother Johnny was out camping with his friends. I

came out as transgender to my family; my mother asked me why I didn't tell them this before. I told them that I thought they wouldn't accept me as their daughter or sister. They assured me that if I became a woman, they would give me their full support. Before my sophomore year in college, I legally changed my name to Jennifer and began living full-time as a woman. I completed the transition four years ago. These issues I dealt with are issues your new classmates are dealing with now; my advice: give them your full support," she continued before we applauded.

Jennifer then returned to her seat as Mr. Martino returned to the podium. "Dr. O'Neill and Miss Westley will answer your questions in a few minutes. First, I'd like to tell you about the students who will be transferring in next week. Mercedes Ramirez is a freshman; she carries a three-point-five grade point average, making the Honor Roll the last two quarters at West Central Alternative High. She began living, dressing and going to school full-time as a girl at the beginning of the academic year. Cindy Hughes is a junior; she carries a three-point-eight grade point average and has been living, dressing and going to school full-time as a girl for the past two years. Her father, Colton Hughes, was the lead attorney in the case. Make them feel welcome," he told them.

After the assembly, I was walking with Lori to our sixth hour class: World History with Mrs. Huston. "Do you know anything about the two new girls?" Lori asked me.

"Mercedes lives a few blocks down the street from me. Her mother, Pilar, is the alterations lady at Emily's Bridal Gallery at the mall. She lives with two older sisters, Ana and Juanita, and their Aunt Laura, a paralegal and law student, in a house they bought

at auction four years ago. This is the old Martin house,” I replied.

“Laura Ramirez de Carlos helped on the case that helped get Mercedes into Central High.”

“Mercedes is one of Sarah’s best friends.”

“What about Cindy Hughes?”

“She’s from a well-to-do family. Her mother, Dr. Irene Gregerson-Hughes, is one of the leading gynecologists in town. She lives with her parents and older sister Eileen in the former Richards house. Colton and Irene bought the house four years ago. She has two older brothers: Colt is in medical school, while Isaac is in law school.”

When school dismissed for the day around three o’clock, the news vehicles were still there. Apparently, the principal called a news conference. Once again, Central High would be in the headlines.

## Three

When I arrived at Current Events class the next morning, the subject would be the events of the previous day. Our teacher, Mr. Kevin Fielding, came into the classroom with a copy of the morning newspaper and hooked his laptop computer to the projector in the classroom.

“It’s not often that our school is the subject of this class, but yesterday, our school was back in the headlines. Many of you witnessed what happened in the auditorium at the start of the fifth hour assembly,” he informed us.

“I saw the four boys walk out. The flags they wore on their T-shirts and jackets creeped me out,” I told the class.

“When Mr. Martino uttered the word ‘transgender’, that must have set the boys off and prompted them to walk out of the auditorium,” Jack added.

“I never thought we would land on the front page again,” Eric then added.

“Many of us may remember the trouble at our school six years ago. It involved two girls who forcibly dressed the guys who crossed them in girls’ clothes. My brother Steve and sister Dottie were not comfortable with these girls around. The two girls, one Tammy Martin and one Missy Richards, caused a breakdown in discipline at Central High. I’m afraid we could be dealing with a similar situation,” I explained.

After I finished speaking, Melissa Banner spoke up. “The four boys who walked out of the mandatory assembly yesterday are known members of a hate group. They hate all minorities, especially the transgender community. They fought so hard against admitting Mercedes and Cindy to Central, but their efforts were in vain. They’ve beaten up several students with varying forms of disabilities since the beginning of the school year. They threw a bunch of firecrackers in Larry Chung’s locker just before the Thanksgiving break; Mr. Millsap asked them why they were doing this, Cloyd Culpeper stated that the reason why they did it was because Larry is a Chinese-American. That sent Cloyd, Bubba, Joe Bob and Howard to a one-week suspension and three straight Saturdays of detention. One of my friends dated Joe Bob; he’s an absolute jerk,” she explained.

Heather O’Sullivan would speak after Melissa. “My mother and I were listening to the talk station last night; a lot of the callers were ripping into the administrators for allowing avowed racists, bigots, homophobes and transphobes into Central. One listener even said that Bubba, Cloyd, Howard and Joe Bob are cowards for hating the two new students because of who they are. Another listener mentioned the discipline problems of six years ago. My father is so incensed at this situation that he’s asked for an audience with Superintendent Jansen.”

“I understand they have been suspended for two weeks,” Jack told the class.

“They have been told by Mrs. Moore to stay away from Central High for two weeks. That way, they will not disrupt the Womanless Pageant this Friday night or the scheduled first day at Central for Cindy Hughes and Mercedes Ramirez. They’ve been warned to watch their step; if they even try to disrupt the new routine in this school, Mr. Martino will give them plenty of heat,” Mr. Fielding explained to us.

When I got out of class, I decided against giving Lori a preview of the coming attractions for her fifth hour Current Events class. As we were walking to our third hour Life Science class with Mrs. Mauldin, she asked me: “Have either you or Sarah met Cindy yet?”

“Neither one of us have met Cindy yet. I’ve met Mercedes, however; Sarah brought her over one night two months ago. She’s a decent girl; Sarah accepts her as the girl she is now, and so do I,” I replied.

“I met Cindy last month at the beauty salon where my mother and I have our hair done. It’s hard for me to believe she was ever a guy,” Lori added.



“I would also find it hard to believe that Cindy was ever a boy. I also found it hard to believe that Mercedes was ever a boy.”

“I was taught to respect everyone, regardless of lifestyle. This is a subject that’s difficult for everyone to understand, let alone accept.”

“I was taught the same way, Lori.”

In the fifth hour Current Events class, Mr. Fielding talked about the same thing with Lori’s classmates. “It’s very obvious that the boys who walked out on the assembly yesterday were taught to hate anything or anyone they perceive as different,” Lori told the class.

“What gives you that idea?” asked Mr. Fielding.

“From what I hear, these particular boys belong to a hate group. This particular group hates ethnic and religious minorities, people of color, the disabled, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender folk. One of my friends, who happens to be autistic, has been relentlessly bullied by folks from this group. They believe in the supremacy of the heterosexual male, and want nothing more than to see all people who they perceive as ‘different’ out of society,” Lori replied.

A light brown-haired boy named Richard Reilly spoke up. “This group is called the East Side Straight Youth; this group is nothing but trouble. This group revived within the last two years at East Central Alternative High School. They felt threatened with the influx of homosexual and transgender students. Cloyd Culpeper tried to get me to join just before Homecoming; I told him no. His views are totally contrary to mine. My parents taught me to respect everybody, regardless of skin color, religion, disability or sexual orientation. I saw Cloyd dump a paralyzed student named Jim Foley out of his wheelchair back

in November. Jim's father beat the crap out of Cloyd over Thanksgiving weekend," he explained.

A tall blonde named Ann Polfus went next. "My grandfather had to deal with a similar group back in the 1960s, during the Civil Rights movement. He was very friendly with several African-American families through our church during this time; one of the youths that dragged him out of his house and beat him brutally was Cloyd's father. He spent five years in prison for his part in the incident. The police shut down the original group shortly after Mr. Culpeper was sent to prison," she then explained.

Following Ann was Jamal Henry, a tall African-American student with a huge Afro. "I've had big problems with these kids on the street; likewise with my sister Keisha. We've been the targets of their taunts and racial slurs since this time last year. My big brother Nate was a junior here at Central when we had the discipline problems six years ago. I have a feeling of *déjà vu*," he told the class.

"Do any of you know the girls coming into this school?" Mr. Fielding then asked.

"I met Cindy Hughes last month at the beauty salon where my mother and I have our hair done. My first impression is that she's a very nice girl; I've been to her house a few times. Mercedes Ramirez is one of the best friends of Sarah Eddie, my boyfriend's sister. She's a nice girl, too. Their families respect their decision to transition from boys to girls," Lori explained.

"I've read about Cindy's parents in the newspaper. They have given their time and money when they're not working to various causes, including Cindy's transgender support group. My younger sister Rachel hangs out with Sarah Eddie and Mercedes Ramirez. Mercedes told her that her father was killed

in action in Afghanistan five years ago. Since then, it's just been her, her sisters, her mother and her aunt," added Richard.

At the end of the day, most of the students were dodging radio and television reporters with questions concerning the anticipated arrival of the two new students. When asked by a reporter about what was happening, I replied: "This is an opportunity for us, as a student body, to learn more about acceptance and compassion. Those who have no tolerance and too much hatred for transgender people obviously do not belong at, nor do they deserve to attend, Central High."

## Four

The following Friday night was our annual Womanless Pageant. This is the opportunity for the guys to dress up as girls, and have fun for a good cause. This year, I was chosen to be Master of Ceremonies. Lori would help with the makeup; Eric would be one of the judges. The other two judges would be Jennifer Westley and Mrs. Donna Williams, one of the Home Economics teachers.

The auditorium would be packed for the event. The theme of this year's pageant is "Going to the Chapel"; a bridal-themed pageant. I arrived at Central High when the clock struck six o'clock; I had to go to the boys' locker room near the gym to change into my black tuxedo; the contestants were getting ready in the dressing room near the stage. When I arrived, Nathan, Jack and Keith had already put on their dresses and were being made up to look like girls. The wedding gown that Renee's mother wore on her wedding day fit Nathan like a glove. Jack was in the



pink bridesmaid's dress Angie wore when her sister Amanda got married last summer; it fit him perfectly. Keith would wear the baby blue bridesmaid's gown Jolene's mother wore when her Aunt Dianne got married last fall; it fit him to a "T".

"What are you doing back here, Greg?" Jolene asked.

"I'm just checking up on their progress," I replied.

"We're awaiting our wigs," Nathan added.

"Phoebe Crandall is bringing them over," Keith then added.

"She's the one who made over your brother's friends when they snooped on Tammy Martin and Missy Richards six years ago," added Jack.

"My brother Steve helped bring this idea to fruition," I told them.

"Have you chosen feminine names?" Lori asked them.

"I'm going on stage as Jacqueline," Jack replied.

"I've chosen the name Karen," Keith added.

"I'm going with Natalie," Nathan then added.

When Phoebe arrived with the wigs, I decided to make my way to the podium on the stage to review my script. On my way, I was stopped by Phoebe. "Greg, did you hear the latest?" she asked me.

"What's the scoop?" I then asked her.