



Reluctant Press

Growing Up Into Jenni

E. B. Stevenson



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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Growing Up Into Jenni

by E.B. Stevenson

One

A lot of things were happening in our family in March of 1973. I was seven years old at the time; I was visiting my maternal grandparents in upstate New York with my younger brother, Johnny, who was four years old. We were reading our books when we got some tragic news. Our parents and paternal grandparents were killed in a house fire in the small southeastern Missouri town where they were living. Both of our grandparents were in their sixties at the time; our father had just celebrated his forty-second birthday. Our mother was only twenty-nine when this tragedy occurred.

Of course, we were very upset when we got news of the fatal fire. But, in their wills, both of my parents felt that Aunt Carole would best care for us. She was my mother's big sister; she survived her own share of tragedies. She was forty-five at the time, and was living in a big mansion near Buffalo with her only surviving daughter, fourteen-year-old tomboy Gloria. Aunt Carole was left with thirty-three million dollars when Uncle Bob was killed in a 1965 plane crash. He was on his way back from a business trip to the jungles of Vietnam when his plane crashed in a field near Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He made his fortune making tents for the military and emergency management teams; his estate was worth over one hundred million dollars. My cousin Bobby, who took over the family business with Uncle Hal, got a third of the estate, with one-fourth divided between family members. He willed the remainder to his favorite charities. Bobby took his portion of the estate to pay for tuition for business school; he had relocated the business from Buffalo to San Francisco in 1971. Four of her six children would meet with violent death by that time; her second son, Bill, was eighteen years old when he

was shot dead by white supremacists in 1962 while participating in a civil rights demonstration in Alabama. Her third son, Harry, and her oldest daughter, Carlye, were killed in Vietnam. Harry was nineteen when he was killed in combat outside Saigon in 1968; Carlye was twenty-one and assigned as a nurse at a field hospital when it was attacked by the Viet Cong in 1972. She was killed with twenty others. Her youngest son, Karl, was sixteen when he was killed in a car crash six weeks after Carlye was killed in action.

We arrived at Aunt Carole's mansion at five o'clock in the afternoon on March 22. She was eagerly awaiting our arrival, despite having just had an argument with Gloria. Johnny and I were dressed in blue jeans and T-shirts and wearing canvas tennis shoes. Our driver, Smithers, got our bags as we rung the doorbell.

Aunt Carole answered the door. "Jerry, Johnny!" she excitedly said.

We were also glad to see Aunt Carole. Gloria was in her bedroom, playing her rock music super loud. Aunt Carole ran up and yelled, "Turn that trash down, Gloria!"

"Aw, screw you!" yelled a defiant Gloria.

"I take it Gloria isn't in the best of moods," I said.

"Jerry, she and I had an argument over the fact that she hasn't worn her dresses, blouses and skirts for quite some time. Lately, she's been wearing blue jeans and T-shirts, refusing to wear her jewelry, swearing at me and our servants, smoking pot, and experimenting with drugs. She's just fourteen, and I'm concerned about losing her. I've already lost Carlye, and I don't want to lose Gloria," Aunt Carole said with worry and concern.

"I hope you can straighten things out with her before it's too late," Johnny added.

We were shown to our rooms, where we settled in. While we were unpacking our clothes and personal effects, Aunt Carole was arranging for tutors for both of us until she could find good schools for us. I finally pulled out the shortwave radio that my father had left me, and tuned it in to the Voice of America. I had to turn it up loud to drown out Gloria's loud music. I continued to listen until Smithers called me down for dinner at precisely six o'clock.

When I arrived at the table, Aunt Carole and Johnny were waiting for me. Gloria was still upstairs, playing her loud rock music to no end. "Sounds like Gloria just won't come out of her room," Aunt Carole said to Smithers.

"I'd better send her governess, Lauren, up to her room," Smithers said with concern.

All of a sudden, Lauren walked in. She was wearing a knee-length red dress. She was a red-haired lass of twenty-two. "What is it, Smithers?" she asked him.

"It's Gloria. She won't come out of her room," he replied.

Lauren ran up to Gloria's room, where she was on her bed, in a comatose condition. She screamed at the top of her lungs, and ran downstairs. "Carole, come quick!" a frightened Lauren yelled.

“What is it, Lauren?”

“It's Gloria. She may have OD'ed,” Lauren yelled with shock.

Johnny and I continued eating our chicken dinner while Aunt Carole ran upstairs to check on Gloria. Smithers was watching over us while we ate. He even prepared a plate for himself.

When Aunt Carole arrived at Gloria's room, she found her in a comatose state. She went and felt for a pulse. “She's alive, but not in the best of shape. Lauren, you'd better call the doctor,” she said.

Lauren ran downstairs to call Dr. Harry Prine, who lived just a mile down the road. He arrived in five minutes, and checked on Gloria. When he came from the room, he had some disturbing news.

“Mrs. Halloran, we have to get Gloria to Buffalo as soon as possible,” Dr. Prine said.

“What's wrong?” she asked in a panicked voice.

“She has apparently had an overdose of a controlled substance. We'll have to airlift her to Buffalo,” he replied.

It was another twenty minutes until the helicopter landed in the circle in front of the mansion. Gloria was put on all sorts of intravenous-administered medicines. She didn't look good at all.

Late that evening, Smithers tucked us into bed. Our first day with Aunt Carole was an eventful one. Later, Aunt Carole would come into my room with some news.

“Jerry, you may have heard that Gloria had an overdose this evening,” she said, trying to reassure me.

“Smithers told me about it,” I added.

“Well, Gloria took an overdose of LSD this afternoon. It's an illegal drug which wreaks havoc with your mind. What happened was that she had her music turned up very loud, and she was taking these little 'trips' while on the drug. Well, she took too much of it, and she's in the hospital, fighting for her life,” she explained.

“Will she be the same again?” I asked her.

“I don't think so. She may have some brain damage,” she replied.

It was several weeks before she emerged from a coma. She was unable to speak, and couldn't move. The drug overdose caused severe brain damage. Aunt Carole made the tough decision to put Gloria into a nursing home. She went into a nearby nursing home in May of 1973.

“Now, I've basically lost my only remaining daughter,” she said to Lauren.

“At least she won't be taking illegal drugs anymore,” Lauren said.

Two

Johnny and I had finished the school year with two tutors. I had an older, maternal tutor named Mrs. McFarland, while Johnny had a youthful tutor in Mrs. Thomas. I had finished the first grade, while Johnny had just finished his first year of preschool. He wasn't old enough for kindergarten yet.

On June 20, 1973, Johnny found something quite interesting in one of the drawers of the dresser in his bedroom. It turned out to be a lavender dress that Gloria wore as a little girl. It had puffed shoulders, lace around the arm openings, a skirt so full that it required a crinoline underneath, flower designs embroidered on the bodice and the front of the skirt, and a bow tie in back at the waistline. He also found a pair of white lace rhumba panties, a white crinoline, white lace tights and a pair of lavender girls shoes. He walked over to the closet, and found a blonde wig that belonged to Aunt Carole. He also found another drawer of the dresser to find it stocked with cosmetics. So, he decided to take his male clothes off, and put on the dress and wig. He then put lipstick on, applied bluish-silver eye shadow to his upper eyelids and blush to his face. For a four-year-old, he seemed pretty skilled with makeup. When I came up to his room, he was looking every bit like a little girl.

"What happened to you?" I asked him.

"I turned myself into a girl," he replied.

"What will Aunt Carole think?" I said with shock.

"I don't know. I guess she'd think that someone took me and put a girl in my place," he replied sheepishly.

"How would you feel if you had to kiss boys?" I then asked.

"I don't know. I never kissed anyone before, boy or girl," he replied, again rather sheepishly.

"I think you'd make just as much of a pretty girl as you would a dapper boy," I snapped.

I left the room to go to my room and read one of my comic books. Then, Aunt Carole came into Johnny's room.

"Johnny! What are you doing in that dress? And why are you wearing my wig?" asked a shocked Aunt Carole.

"I wanted to try on a dress," he replied.

"Well, you fit nicely into Gloria's old dress. You remind me a little bit of Gloria when she was your age," she cried.

"Do you think I would make a pretty girl?" he then asked.

"Hmmm, I don't know. You make a real handsome boy, but you would probably make a pretty girl, too," replied a skeptical Aunt Carole.

"May I play in this for the rest of the day?" he asked.

"I think you can. But if this keeps up, it may become part of your world," she replied.

Johnny sat in his room the rest of the day, wearing that dress. Later that afternoon, Aunt Carole ran up to the storage closet in the mansion to see if she could find any more of Gloria's old dresses. I walked in five minutes later, after playing in the sandbox.

"Did you brush yourself off before coming in, Jerry?" she asked me.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied, then asked her what she was doing.

"I'm looking for more of Gloria's old dresses. I'm sure one of them could fit Johnny," she replied.

"Mother told us that if we constantly dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex, then that could become part of who we are," I added.

"If he wants to dress up as a girl again, I've got to find some more dresses." She then pulled out a small white gown.

"Isn't that the wedding gown she wore on Halloween one year?" I asked her.

"She wore that when she was five years old. I'm sure it can fit Johnny now," she replied.

"I just hope Johnny doesn't decide to become a girl," I added.

"What if he decides to do that?" she asked me.

"I don't know; I'm too young to answer these questions," I replied rather sheepishly.

"Doctors can now turn a boy into a girl," she added.

"I didn't know that such things were done," I said, acting as if I was dumb.

When bedtime came, Aunt Carole helped Johnny take off his makeup. He was able to put the wig back into its proper place, and hung the dress and crinoline up. The tights and panties went into the laundry. When he changed into his male pajamas, I asked him, "Well, how do you feel now that you've worn a dress?"

"I feel good about it," he replied.

"I still don't know about this. If this does turn into part of who you are, then I won't stand in your way," I added.

"Get to bed, Jerry," Aunt Carole said as she walked into the bathroom.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied before heading straight to my bedroom.

She walked Johnny to his bedroom. "I hope your day in a dress doesn't have any affect on who you are for the rest of your life," she said with a touch of concern.

"I don't know, Aunt Carole. It felt good to be in a dress," he said as they were entering his bedroom.

"But, if you keep wearing dresses, you could end up becoming a girl. You'd lose all sense of your identity as a boy," she added.

“Wait and see,” he added as he climbed into bed.

Three

Gloria had lapsed into a persistent vegetative state by the end of 1975, due to the excessive brain damage she received as a result of the drug overdose. By the summer of 1976, by which time I was ten and Johnny was seven, the end was near for her.

On the evening of July 10, 1976, Aunt Carole was discussing this possibility in my room. “Jerry, Johnny, I have something I want to discuss with you,” she said with concern in her voice.

“What is it you want to discuss, Aunt Carole?” I asked.

“I got a call from the doctor this afternoon. He says that Gloria has, at most, six more months to live. Your cousin has not been well at all since she took that drug overdose three years ago. Her bills have been very expensive, and it's getting to the point where I will find it too hard to maintain this mansion,” she explained.

“I'm guessing that you are thinking about moving,” I added.

“Should Gloria pass away, I'm thinking about moving the three of us to San Francisco. Your cousin Bobby is out there; he's running the business your Uncle Bob started back during World War II,” she informed us.

“I've never been to San Francisco,” I said with a little excitement.

Once I was finished with that sentence, the phone rang. Aunt Carole ran into the hallway to pick it up. It was bad news.

She walked back into my bedroom with a sad look on her face. “What's wrong?” Johnny asked.

“Gloria has just died,” she replied tearfully.

We both comforted Aunt Carole while she was composing herself. “Where did I go wrong?” she asked rather angrily.

“It was Gloria that went wrong,” I replied.

“How so?” she asked me, as if it was urgent.

“Gloria brought this all on herself with her addiction to drugs. She was constantly smoking pot and taking LSD. I learned in my health class that these drugs can do damage to the average person's mind. I even had to do a report on this for class; since I couldn't ask you, I asked Smithers and Lauren,” I explained.

“And what grade did you get?” she asked, refreshing her memory.

“I got an 'A' on it,” I replied.

When she composed herself, Aunt Carole went into her closet for one of her old dresses to take to the undertaker. She would be in charge of the arrangements for Gloria's funeral.

She called all of her surviving relatives to tell them the news that Gloria was dead at the age of seventeen. Almost all of them came in for the funeral on July 13. We also had a visitation for her the night before the funeral. When I took a look at my departed cousin's body, she looked more beautiful and peaceful than the last time I saw her. Aunt Carole selected a pink satin dress that she could no longer wear for her funeral. Gloria had lost a lot of weight during the last three years of her life.

Aunt Carole remained composed during the three days leading up to Gloria's funeral. She wore a black dress each day, as she was in mourning for her last remaining daughter. She added a veiled hat to her ensemble for the funeral.

Smithers delivered the eulogy. "Gloria Marie Halloran was born on January 29, 1959 in Jamestown, New York, and departed this life on July 10, 1976 in Buffalo, New York. She is preceded in death by her father, Robert Halloran, two brothers, William, Karl Halloran, along with Lance Corporal Harold Halloran, U.S. Marine Corps, and one sister, Lieutenant Carlye Halloran, U.S. Army. She is survived by her mother, Carole Reese Halloran of Jamestown, New York; her maternal grandparents, Paul and Caroline Reese of Buffalo, New York; her paternal grandparents, Richard and Mary Halloran of Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada; and her brother, Robert Halloran, Jr. and his companion, Jeralyn Blauel, both of Vallejo, California," he said to the gathering.

He continued: "The death of Gloria Halloran should teach us a lesson about the dangers of abusing drugs. She just didn't have the willpower to overcome this dangerous addiction to marijuana and LSD. They just took control of her life; souring her once-sunny attitude just a year before she overdosed, causing brain damage. You shouldn't even try illicit drugs; they could kill you. Look what they did to Gloria."

Gloria was buried in a cemetery in Uncle Bob's hometown of Tonawanda, next to her brother Bill. The headstone said: "OUR BELOVED SUNSHINE" on one line; the line below said "GLORIA MARIE HALLORAN", and the bottom line simply read "1959-1976". It was a sad time for Aunt Carole and her family. Within a week of Gloria's funeral, the mansion was put up for sale.

It was three weeks after Gloria was buried that Aunt Carole gave us the news. "The mansion has been sold to a young couple from New York City; they paid three million dollars for this place. We have to be out of here by the end of August," she said to us.

"That means we're headed for San Francisco," I added.

On August 25, 1976, we moved the last of our personal effects out of the mansion. Lauren, our governess, left on the same day so she could get married. Smithers stayed on with the new owners. That afternoon, we were finally headed west.

Four

We arrived in Vallejo on August 29, after a long four-day trip from upstate New York. Once we arrived, cousin Bobby was generous enough to lend guest bedrooms to myself, Johnny and Aunt Carole. The next afternoon, his household assistant, Olivia Reiker, a youthful-looking chestnut brown-haired woman of fifty-five, was arranging tutors for Johnny and myself. Bobby also asked her husband, fifty-eight-year-old silver-haired gardener Dan, to trim the bushes. Aunt Carole left in Bobby's 1972 Ford; one of three cars he owned. She was looking for a place to live. One of her friends, Rachel Johnson, had become a real estate agent in the area.

"Carole Halloran!" she exclaimed, surprised to see her.

"Rachel Johnson, how have you been?" Aunt Carole asked her.

"I've been doing great! Business has been booming out here, especially since so many gay and lesbian couples have moved out here," Rachel replied.

"Rachel, I'm here to look for a house for me and my nephews," she added.

"I take it they're your sister's kids," Rachel said inquisitively.

"I've been taking care of Jerry and Johnny since my sister Christine died. I'm looking for a house with four bedrooms," Aunt Carole said in a somewhat urgent tone.

"Why four?" Rachel asked.

"I need the fourth bedroom for my office. I plan to start a business from my home," replied Aunt Carole.

Rachel showed her several houses in the area; Aunt Carole decided on a new house in Pacifica, overlooking the ocean. "The kids will have plenty of space to move around," Aunt Carole said, happy with her decision.

"There's also plenty of space for storage, too," Rachel added.

Aunt Carole's purchase of the new house didn't close for another two weeks. The sale had been held up briefly in probate court because of a lingering estate battle between the two sons of the original owner, an elderly man who passed away about the same time Gloria did. Within a week, the estate was settled, and the sale was allowed to proceed. We finally moved into our new home on September 20.

I was the only one that got a bedroom with a view of the ocean besides Aunt Carole. Johnny would take the room next to Aunt Carole's office. We explored the house for a while, and were amazed.

"The basement is huge!" Johnny said in awe.

"You said it! Enough space for me to play hockey," I added.

"There's not going to be any hockey played in this house," reminded Aunt Carole.

"Yes, ma'am," I said to her, rather dejectedly.

Our rooms were a bit smaller than the ones we had in upstate New York, but they were big enough for us. The house was a little smaller, too. Yet, it was enough for the three of us. Our personal effects arrived from storage the same afternoon, so we settled in over the next few days. Over the next few years, however, things would change for Johnny, and for all of us.

Five

Ever since he was four years old, I knew that something was different with Johnny. While I liked to play baseball and hockey, like the other boys, Johnny preferred more quiet, feminine activities. His dressing in girls clothes was infrequent at first, but became a little more frequent during the time Gloria was wasting away in a nursing home. Now that we were in the San Francisco Bay Area, he was free to explore his feminine feelings. However, Aunt Carole and I would limit his crossdressing in the first two years of our residency in the Bay Area.

Aunt Carole had started her own photography business in January of 1977. She started this business by going around San Francisco taking pictures of Bay Area attractions and selling them to magazines and newspapers. When she was not out in the field, she would be making arrangements for future photo shoots. However, I came up with an idea to show off Johnny as a girl.

"Aunt Carole?" I asked her.

"What is it, Jerry?" she asked.

"You know how much Johnny loves to dress up as a girl. He's so comfortable with wearing girls clothes, that I have an idea," I replied.

"What's that?" she asked.

"Why not have him sit for portraits, dressed as a girl?" I would ask.

"You know, Jerry...that doesn't sound like a bad idea! That way, others can see how adorable Johnny looks as a girl," she replied.

By that time, Johnny was able to fit into the dresses Gloria wore as an eight-year-old. He was smaller than most seven-year-old boys. Aunt Carole walked into his room that evening. He was in a royal blue velvet dress with puffed satin sleeves, a pair of blue tights and a pair of blue flats. A brunette wig, once belonging to Aunt Carole, completed the ensemble. "Johnny?" she asked him.

"What is it, Aunt Carole?" he asked.

"Jerry and I both know how much you love to dress up as a girl. Well, we've got an idea that you might like," she replied.

"What is it?" he asked, not knowing what was in store.

"We thought it would be a good idea for you to pose for pictures dressed as a girl," she replied.

"You mean, wearing dresses and stuff?" he asked.

"Yes, you would be wearing girls' clothes. We thought we'd have pictures taken of you in girls clothes, in case you decide to spend your life as a boy," she briefly explained.

"In that case, that sounds like a good idea," he added.

The photo session was set up for the Sunday before Halloween. Aunt Carole and I were searching through some of Gloria's old clothes to find dresses that would fit Johnny. All of a sudden, I stumbled on a discovery.

"Aunt Carole, look at this!" I exclaimed to her.

She had gently set a red satin dress on top of one of the boxes, and walked over to have a look. "Oh, my gosh!" she exclaimed, as if she had found something from her past.

"What is it?" I asked her.

"Jerry, it's my wedding gown!" she said, as if she had found a lost friend.

"And it's been well-preserved over the years, too," I added.

"I think this still may be a little big for Johnny; he'll grow into it over time," she then added.

"Didn't Gloria wear a wedding dress for Halloween more than once?" I asked her.

"She also wore one when she was seven and when she was nine," she replied.

Aunt Carole and I rummaged through the boxes, and found the wedding dresses Gloria wore for Halloween when she was seven and nine. Each had a different design. I also found a flower girl's gown Gloria wore at a family wedding when she was eight. "I'm sure Johnny can fit into this one," I said to her.

"I'll have to get him to try on all these dresses," she answered.

Aunt Carole and I took the dresses up to his room, where Johnny tried on and modeled each dress. We finally decided on one of the wedding dresses, the flower girl's gown, and several other dresses. Aunt Carole had a silk bouquet designed for him to hold when he was wearing the wedding dress; the one Gloria wore when she was seven.

The Sunday before Halloween came quickly enough. The night before, I helped Aunt Carole set up the camera, lights and a background for the shoot. She had spent the morning fussing over Johnny, making him up to look like a girl. A shoulder-length brunette wig for the photo session; most seven-year-old girls we knew didn't wear their hair longer than shoulder-length. Just before noon, she helped him into a red satin dress with a lace overlay. He also wore white tights

and red and white girls shoes with quarter-inch heels. Then, it was time to take him to the makeshift studio downstairs.

I had to wear a suit that day, as Aunt Carole wanted some photos taken with me. She did several photos of the girlish Johnny by himself, then several with me. After shooting a roll of film, it was time for a change of outfits.

His next outfit was a Kelly green satin dress with puffed sleeves, a bodice adorned with lace, a bow tie in back at the waistline, and a lace-trimmed hem. Again, several photos of a very feminine Johnny, then several with the two of us. She shot another roll before another outfit change. This time, both of us had to change outfits.

I changed into a tuxedo for some photos with Johnny in the flower girl's gown. It was a pink gown with puffed sleeves, a neckline of lace netting, a skirt so full that it required a crinoline underneath, and a pair of pink sandal-style shoes. He even gave me a kiss on the cheek in one shot. "What was that for?" I asked him.

"Isn't that what girls normally do? Kiss boys?" he replied.

"Yeah, I guess so," I added.

I remained in the tux while Aunt Carole helped Johnny get into the wedding gown. I sat down on the stool, and thought to myself: "Gee, is he really thinking of becoming a girl?" What name would he select if he went ahead and lived the rest of his life as a girl? Would my life be the same again because he wants to be a girl?

Aunt Carole wanted some shots of Johnny with the veil over his made-up face. After that, she wanted some of him looking at the bouquet. Then, several shots with me as the groom. She then asked us to share a kiss. While I wasn't quite used to being kissed by anyone, male or female, I naturally complied with my aunt's request.

"I think I'm beginning to like kissing boys," he confessed to Aunt Carole after the bridal shoot.

The same routine, except for the kissing, was utilized for Johnny in the other three dresses Aunt Carole chose. One was a white satin dress with puffed sleeves, a lace-adorned bodice, and a tiered skirt with lace trimming each tier. Another was a pink square dancing dress with a matching petticoat, tights and shoes. The last one was a burgundy velvet dress with puffed sleeves. When the photo session was finally over, it was nearly six o'clock. Aunt Carole shot a total of fifty rolls of film of Johnny dressed as a girl. He had a surprise waiting for him when the day was done: Aunt Carole had laid out a pair of girls blue jeans and a red cotton blouse for him. He changed into the items she had laid out on the bed, while I prepared soup and salad for dinner. Needless to say, Johnny stayed dressed as a girl through the rest of the evening, and returned to boy mode at bedtime. Little did I know that this would be the shape of things to come.

Six

On November 16, 1977, Aunt Carole reached a milestone. That day would be her fiftieth birthday. Her only surviving offspring, Bobby, would be throwing the party for her. By that time, only her youngest sister and oldest brother were alive. Aunt Celia was thirty-nine, married twenty years to Uncle George, and raising four children on a farm in Minnesota. Uncle Fred was fifty-three, recently widowed with five children; only his youngest, a seventeen-year-old daughter named Alison, was still living with him. Bobby's chauffeur, Xavier Norton, picked us up at the house around four-thirty. As for Uncle John, he was killed in the Korean conflict.

I decided to wear my suit that day; Johnny decided in favor of a red button-down shirt and a pair of slacks. He wore the panties Aunt Carole gave him after his *en femme* photo session underneath. I had turned twelve the month before; Johnny was just a few days past his ninth birthday.

A limousine took Aunt Carole, Johnny and myself to Bobby's place in Vallejo. She was able to put some photos of Johnny dressed as a girl in her purse. When we arrived, Xavier let us out of the limousine, while Aunt Carole remained inside for another few minutes.

Bobby's mansion was rather ornate; pretty much like the mansion Aunt Carole had in upstate New York. When we walked in, he was waiting for us; he had a beautiful blonde woman with him. "Jerry! Johnny!" he exclaimed, as if he was glad to see us. "Hello Bobby," I said.

"Where's my mother?" he asked me.

"She'll be in any minute now," I replied.

"Who's the lady with you?" Johnny asked.

"This is my fiancée, Jeralyn Blauel. Jeri, this is Jerry and Johnny Bland; the sons of my late Aunt Christine and Uncle Larry," he replied.

"A pleasure to meet you two. Bobby has told me a lot about you," Jeri added.

Then, Aunt Celia ran into the room, telling everyone to be quiet. "Turn out the lights!" she told the guests.

Once the lights were turned out, Xavier opened the door for Aunt Carole. "It's time, Mrs. Halloran," Xavier said with a strong Jamaican accent.

Aunt Carole walked up the cobblestone walkway to the front door. As soon as she got there, she slowly opened the door, and walked right in. She walked down a fairly wide corridor to an open door, where she turned on the lights.

"SURPRISE!" everyone yelled.

"For me?" asked a shocked Aunt Carole.

"Happy birthday, Mom," Bobby said before giving her a kiss on the cheek.

Jeri rolled out a cake with two candles; one in the shape of a "5" and another in the shape of a "0". We all sang "Happy Birthday"; before he handed the knife to Aunt Carole, Bobby told Aunt Carole the news.

"On the occasion of your fiftieth birthday, Mom, I would like to give you a surprise of my own. I don't think you've had the pleasure of meeting Jeri yet," he told her with confidence.

"You've told me about her, but I haven't met her yet," Aunt Carole added.

"Two years ago, Jeri and I met at a debutante's cotillion in San Francisco. She had just graduated from Stanford with a degree in business; her father, an English linguistics professor, presented her to society for the first time. The first time she glanced down at me from the stage, I somehow knew she was the girl for me. I asked her to dance with me, and she kindly accepted. I danced with her the whole night through; the next thing I knew, I asked her out to dinner. We started going steady within three months; it got to the point where I couldn't envision life without her. After Uncle Hal and I concluded a huge sale of canvas tents to Boy Scout councils in ten western states three months ago, I proposed to her. We plan to get married next spring," he explained before Jeri took her place next to him.

"She's beautiful! Bobby, I approve of your choice," Aunt Carole said with pride.

"Thank you, Carole," Jeri added.

His household assistant, Olivia, approached Aunt Carole. "He couldn't have found a better girl for him than Jeri," she said.

"How's Dan these days?" Aunt Carole asked.

"He's still fit as a fiddle; in fact, he was out in the pool yesterday after his chores were done," Olivia replied.

"He doesn't know his limitations," she added in amazement.

While all of this was going on, I was sitting down on the couch. I had just finished eating my cake and drinking my milk; I was supposed to keep an eye on Johnny. Suddenly, I found that he was sitting down on the other end of the couch. He was reading one of Jeri's bridal magazines. I scooted over to the other side of the couch, and asked him: "Is there something that interests you?"

"These wedding dresses are so pretty," he replied.

"The tuxedos look handsome, too," I added.

All of a sudden, Jeri approached us. "Are you finding my bridal magazines interesting reading?" she asked.

"I have yet to look at the recipes," I said jokingly.

"I hope you have picked a pretty dress for your wedding," Johnny added.

"It's a surprise, as far as Bobby is concerned," Jeri then added.

It was past ten o'clock when Johnny fell asleep on the couch, still with the bridal magazine in his hand. I slowly picked it up from his chest, walked over to the bar, and handed it back to Jeri.

"I believe this is yours," I said to her.

"Thank you, Jerry," she said with gratitude.

It wasn't until ten-thirty that the guests began to leave. By eleven o'clock, just Bobby, Jeri, Aunt Carole, Johnny and I remained. Johnny was fast asleep on the couch.

"This has been the best birthday of my life; all of this thanks to you," Aunt Carole said to Bobby in gratitude.

"I thought it was only fitting," Bobby added.

"Well, I have to get the boys home and in bed; Johnny has been asleep for the past hour," she told him with a slight sense of urgency.

"If you need anything, give me or Bobby a call," Jeri then added.

"I will," Aunt Carole said with confidence.

Xavier pulled the limousine up to the driveway as they finished the conversation. Aunt Carole carried Johnny out to the limo, while I walked on my own power. We didn't get home until past midnight; by then, I was falling asleep. Aunt Carole then carried Johnny back into the house, took off his shoes and socks, and tucked him into bed. I then took off my clothes, put on a pair of pajamas, and went to bed. After that, things started to slowly change, as far as Johnny was concerned.

Seven

By the time he turned twelve on November 12, 1980, Johnny's crossdressing had become more frequent. It was at the point where he was spending his waking hours on school days as a boy, while spending his sleeping and some weekend hours dressed as a girl. His effeminate ways got him teased constantly at school; he just ignored it. However, Aunt Carole had him removed from school after he finished sixth grade in June 1981. That summer, he began dressing as a girl on weekdays. He had his blonde hair grown out, and was planning to have his ears pierced. Aunt Carole was getting worried.

It was July of 1981. I was fifteen years old, about to enter my sophomore year of high school at the time. Aunt Carole had me removed from public school, registering me at a private high school for the following school year. I, too, was getting worried about Johnny. Since I had been home from my baseball team, suffering from tendonitis in my left leg, I limped over to the couch, and sat down with my left leg propped up. Aunt Carole was in the love seat next to the couch.

"Aunt Carole?" I asked her.

"What is it, Jerry?" she asked.

"I know you're concerned about Johnny. He's been dressing more and more as a girl since the school year ended. I'm getting concerned about it, too," I replied.

"He's developing an emotional, physical and romantic attraction to boys. I know that you're attracted to girls, but I think Johnny may be a homosexual," Aunt Carole added.

"Maybe there's a more logical explanation than that," I said rather rationally.

"What's that?" she asked.

"Last year, we were learning about transsexualism in our psychology class," I replied.

"Transsexualism?" asked a quizzical and skeptical Aunt Carole.

"A transsexual is someone who is born with the body of one sex, but feels that he or she is of the opposite sex. In other words, such persons are born boys, but are wholly convinced that they are really girls," I replied.

"In Johnny's case, what will happen?" she asked with concern.

"After the diagnosis of transsexualism is conferred by a qualified professional, he would be referred to other professionals who deal with this condition. He would be given female hormones, which would allow him to grow breasts; his hips and butt would be more pronounced. In other words, he would assume a more female shape. His feelings about boys will change. He will have to live full-time as a girl for at least a year before he can be recommended for a sex-change operation. Once the surgery is completed, he will be completely female; a girl," I explained.

"If that's what he wants, then we shouldn't stand in his way," she added.

Aunt Carole and I walked to Johnny's room. He was in a black skirt that extended down to about an inch above the knee, along with a black sleeveless body-suit and a pair of black flats. His hair had grown to shoulder-length by that time; he was also made up to look like a girl. "Johnny, we need to talk," Aunt Carole told him.

"What about?" he asked as he sat down in his chair, crossing his legs in a feminine fashion.

"Jerry and I are getting concerned. You've been dressing most of the time as a girl since the school year ended. We're concerned that you're losing what's left of your male identity; we both know that boys who dress like girls are often ridiculed and made fun of. We don't want to see you get hurt," she said with concern.

"I had to protect you from bullies this past year. Had it not been for my beating one of your bullies up so bad that he landed in the hospital, you would have been in a world of hurt right now," I added.

"Is being a girl what you want?" she asked him.

"I am a girl, Aunt Carole; I have all the emotions of a girl. And I want so much to be a girl," he replied.

"Well, I'll have to call a psychiatrist," she added.

"We need to know if becoming a girl is really what's best for you," I said.

Dr. Susan Easley was a friend of Aunt Carole's from her college days. She had been practicing as a psychiatrist in the Bay Area for twenty years by that time. An appointment was set up for Johnny to see her at three o'clock on the afternoon of July 24, 1981.

Johnny decided to wear a light blue dress for the trip to the doctor's office. He also wore beige pantyhose borrowed from Aunt Carole, a pair of light blue flats, and a pair of clip-on faux pearl earrings. He also wore a gold chain around his neck, with a heart pendant. After talking to me and Aunt Carole about his condition, Johnny came in and sat down on the couch. He crossed his legs in a feminine manner.



The doctor began with a series of questions. The first one was, "Do you feel that you are a boy or a girl?"

"I feel that I am definitely a girl," he replied.

"Do you like to kiss boys?" she then asked.

"Yes, Susan. I feel comfortable kissing boys," he replied.

"Do you feel more attracted, in an emotional, physical and romantic sense, to boys?" she then asked him.

"Yes, I do. I often dream of making love to a boy one day," he said lovingly.

"Do you feel that you are trapped in the body of the wrong sex?" she asked frankly.

"Yes, and it's annoying!" he replied in frustration.

"How would you feel about a sex change?" she asked with the same level of frankness.