



Reluctant Press presents:

The Transition & Courtship of STEPHANIE

E. B. Stevenson



A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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THE TRANSITION AND COURTSHIP OF STEPHANIE

by **E.B. Stevenson**

One

Coming out of a second bitter divorce was very difficult for me. It was September of 1993, and I had just finalized my divorce from my second wife, Kara. She was twenty-three years old, and had committed adultery by establishing an extramarital relationship with a professional wrestler. I had to give her a one-time payment of \$200,000 and got possession of the house we bought together in 1990. Adultery also ended my first marriage in the summer of 1987; my first wife, Suzy, left me for a professional bodybuilder. That divorce cost me \$100,000.

I had become a successful accountant, working for my father, Edwin Erickson, at his business in Chesterfield. The business, which specializes in making cabinets and bathroom fixtures for hotels, college dormitories and other institutions, was started by my grandfather, Michael "Gus" Erickson, in 1946 in north St. Louis. My older brother, Eddie, was then thirty-three years old. He had been married to Rachel for ten years at this point. Rachel also came from a fairly wealthy family; her family was in real estate. My younger brother, Brian, was twenty-five and had just married Mandy, who was twenty-two and finishing her Bachelor's degree in accounting.

After Kara and I divorced, my feelings of femininity were starting to reemerge. I first realized I should have been a girl when I was three years old, when a few cousins on my mother's side dressed me up as a girl. As I remember, I was wearing a pink satin dress with a bodice, puffed sleeves and huge skirt adorned with white lace. I kept my feelings of femininity hidden in college and while I was married. At this point, I felt I was living a lie.

Even though I was born a boy, I felt, deep inside, that I should have been a girl. In the weeks following the finalization of my second divorce, I began electrolysis treatments and started building a feminine wardrobe by buying several dresses, along with assorted lingerie and several pairs of flats and pumps.

In September 28, 1993 I scheduled an appointment with Dr. Heather George, a psychologist who specializes in treating people with gender identity disorders. I decided to wear a pair of pink panties underneath my male clothing. When I arrived at her office in Clayton, I sat down and read several women's magazines before I was called in by a tall, middle-aged woman with curly brunette hair, wearing a baby blue dress. "Come in, Eric," she said.

After several preliminary questions, she asked me, "What is it that you're dealing with now?"

"Heather, it's like this. I feel like a woman, unfairly trapped in a man's body. Even though I've had these feelings since I was a boy, they've emerged stronger than ever in the past three weeks, since my divorce from my second wife was finalized. I feel I've been living a lie for the first twenty-seven years of my life. I have tried so hard to fit into a man's world, but I've never quite fit in. I've had two failed marriages as a man, and although I've been successful in my career, my personal life is pretty much a shambles because of my being a woman, trapped in a male body."

"What were your wives like?"

"Both of them were domineering. My first wife, Suzy, was a sweet girl when I dated her in high school. Her family owned a sheet metal business in Maryland Heights. Even though she was a year and a half older than I was, I thought she was the girl of my dreams. But, after we got married and bought a house together, she wanted things done her way. I wasn't given a voice in what to do with the house, and she wouldn't listen when I reminded her about our marriage vows. When she brought her boyfriend, a professional bodybuilder, to our house, I told her to get out; I was tired of her domineering nature, and angry that she broke the marriage vows by forsaking me for another man. The next day, I filed for divorce; it was finalized on what would have been our first wedding anniversary.

"We were quite young when we married; I was twenty and she was twenty-one. I had buried myself in my course work for a degree in accounting and working for my father, loading boxes. My parents hired Kara, who became my second wife, as a housekeeper at my residence six months later. She was nineteen when she came into my household; although she had a high school education, she couldn't go into college because of a developmental disability that was aggravated by a bout with meningitis when she was twelve. She also had a chaotic family life; her parents often quarreled, and her father was emotionally and mentally abusive toward her and her sisters.

"Kara and I fell madly in love, and after I graduated from college with a Bachelor's degree in accounting in 1989, we eloped to Las Vegas and got married. She wasn't really into the high society lifestyle of my parents; she continued to dress in inexpensive clothes, rather than the expensive gowns and other clothes that women in my social class were

wearing. She soon began to demand that I sell the house and move into a middle class neighborhood; she also wanted to associate with whomever she pleased.

"By the summer of 1991, I began to suspect that she was having an extramarital affair when she spent a month out of town with one of her friends from her middle class neighborhood in northern St. Louis County. When she told me of the affair this past spring, I told her to get out and go live with that professional wrestler she was seeing. I immediately began divorce proceedings against her; it was finalized two weeks ago."

"How have your feminine feelings reemerged?"

"After the divorce was finalized, I began to seriously question my gender identity. I was beginning to realize I was living a lie, masquerading as a man when I really felt that I should be a woman. Two weeks ago, I began electrolysis treatments; last week, I treated myself to a shopping spree, where I bought mainly women's clothes. I'm a size 22W when I wear a dress, so buying dresses was a bit expensive. I also bought panties, bras, stockings, pantyhose, flats and pumps; I also bought some makeup. I've decided to let my hair grow; I'd like to have my hair at least down to my shoulders by the time I start living full-time as a woman."

"Have you decided on a new name for yourself?"

"I've decided to change my name from Eric Sheldon Erickson to Stephanie Elizabeth Erickson. Stephanie is my cousin's name; Elizabeth is my maternal grandmother's name."

"Are you still emotionally, physically, romantically and sexually attracted to women, or have those feelings changed?"

"I've become increasingly attracted to men. I've longed to be the one giving satisfaction, instead of being the one receiving it."

"What would be your goal for your treatment?"

"My eventual goal is to have my sex surgically reassigned, and live out the rest of my life as a woman. I will do everything it takes for me to get there."

"Do you really feel that you would be better off as a woman?"

"Yes, I feel that I would be better off as a woman. The sooner I start living as a woman, the better I'll feel."

"This is the course I recommend for patients who are considering such a significant change. After the diagnosis is conferred, you will need to see a number of specialists. You will need to see a psychiatrist, who will advise you on a hormone treatment schedule. Then you will need to see an endocrinologist, who will monitor your hormone levels. As you go further in your hormone treatments, you will develop breasts; given your size, you will probably be able to develop a significant bust line. Your hips and buttocks will be more pronounced.

"When you've developed a feminine body, we'll ease you into what we call the Real Life Test. You will be living, working and dressing full-time as a woman for at least a year, so we can remove any doubts as to your ability to live as a female. Once you've passed the Real Life Test, then we can recommend you for sex reassignment surgery, in which the

male genitalia are removed, and female genitalia constructed. You won't be able to bear children, but you can have sex with a man to your heart's desire."

A month later, after several sessions, Heather made her diagnosis. For that session, I decided to wear my blue pastel dress, light brown wig and a pair of white flats with light makeup.

"Miss Erickson, after examining your case at length, I feel that the best diagnosis that I can give is that you have a gender identity disorder. In other words, you are a transsexual. Even though you have a male body, you have displayed a strong desire to become female. I am recommending you go see a psychiatrist, who will recommend a course of hormone therapy for you. I'm also referring you to an endocrinologist, who will monitor your hormone levels. Congratulations, Stephanie, this is the first day of the rest of your life."

I decided to work as a man, but live at home as a woman. The only time I would not dress as a woman at home was when my family came over. After my appointment, I went out on a shopping spree, buying plenty of dresses, nighties and assorted lingerie. I also bought plenty of makeup, so I could work on my feminine appearance. By the beginning of 1994, I worked hard enough to perfect a natural, feminine look. I continued with my electrolysis treatments, which I began once my second divorce was finalized.

Just before Valentine's Day, I invited Renee McGowan, my closest female friend at the time, to my place. That night, I would dress as a woman. I chose my red chiffon dress, white lace bra, matching bikini panties, garter belt, and lace-top stockings with red and white flats. I also decided on my new diamond heart-shaped earrings, pearl necklace and gold bracelet. Renee was Kara's best friend in childhood; she remained friends with me after the divorce, and disowned Kara. I let my hair grow since the divorce; now I had it down to my shoulders. It was femininely styled for the occasion.

The doorbell rang around seven-thirty. "Is that you, Eric?" Renee asked me.

"It's me, but I'm not going to be Eric much longer," I replied.

Renee, who was five-seven, was wearing a pink chiffon dress, white stockings and pink high heels with her long, brunette hair worn down. She sat on the couch while I poured her a cup of tea. After I served her tea, I prepared one for myself. I sat down on the loveseat, and began to tell my story.

"Renee, I'm going to be quite candid with you. Since Kara and I divorced, I have been dealing with issues concerning my gender identity," I informed her.

"Fill me in," Renee said inquisitively.

"I first put on an article of feminine clothing when I was three years old. I was asked to put on a frilly dress that belonged to my cousin Jeannine; she wore that while square dancing. I tried to keep my feminine feelings hidden throughout my youth, even through my two failed marriages. Three weeks after my divorce was finalized, I went to see a therapist about my gender identity. Finally, this past October, I was officially diagnosed with gender identity disorder. Renee, I'm a woman, trapped in a man's body."

"Does this mean that you're about to go through a sex change?"

"I am preparing to go through a sex change. I started my electrolysis treatments after the divorce became final. Through the transition, I will be receiving female hormones. This

will allow me to develop female breasts, more pronounced buttocks, wider hips and softer skin. I have to live full-time as a woman for at least one year, so there will be no doubts about my ability to function in society. Once I've met all the criteria, I will undergo a sex-change operation. That will entail removing my male genitals, and creating female genitalia."

"So, as time goes on, you will become more and more of a woman."

"That's the general idea. I've become more emotionally, physically, romantically and sexually attracted to men in recent months. I dream of one day satisfying a man, even marrying a man."

"What should I call you from now on?"

"Please call me Stephanie."

"So, when do you hope to have your operation?"

"Sometime in the next three years."

"Stephanie, you have my full support as you become a woman. I hope we'll become closer as friends as your transition goes along."

"I'm sure we'll become closer friends as I become a woman."

"You'll also have the support of my boyfriend, Ryan Louis."

"I remember meeting him at your parents' charity social last fall."

"When are you going to tell your family?"

"I'm going to tell them when I'm ready. I hope they'll accept me as a woman."

"I'm sure they'll accept you. The one advantage to being a girl is that around here, you'll have your pick of men. I know many men who are having a hard time finding a woman to go out with, let alone be in a relationship with or married to. I'm sure you had a hard time getting dates when you were living as a man."

"That's what I hear from the other girls. I've had a very difficult time finding a woman when I was divorced the first time."

"You're not the first one I know who's going through this major change in your life. One of my ex-boyfriends is going through the transition right now; he's just about at the point where he'll be living full-time as a woman. I knew him as Eddie, but I haven't met the woman he's about to become, Ellen. She's been attracting guys left and right when she's out as a woman."

"What's she doing these days?"

"Ellen is working as a model and clerk at her older sister Emily's bridal shop in San Francisco in order to earn the money for her sex-change operation."

"I'm looking at many options for my transition; I really don't want to transition working for my father."

"I'm sure you'll find something that will allow you to work as a woman, too."

Renee and I talked late into the night; by the time we were done talking, it was almost midnight. After Renee left for the apartment she shared with Ryan, I decided to change into my peach-colored nightgown, and get into bed.

Two

It was a cloudy Sunday afternoon in April 1994. I had called my parents, brothers and sisters-in-law to my place of residence to tell them the news that I was becoming a woman. By that time, I was developing breasts, my nipples were becoming more sensitive, and my hips and buttocks were wide enough that I could barely squeeze into my male clothes. I decided on a white floral print dress.

My sister-in-law Mandy was the first to arrive, just after two o'clock. "Eric, you look so much like a girl!" she exclaimed in awe.

"That's what I'm going to tell everyone today. You're the first one in the family to find out that I'm going through a sex change."

"You mean you're going to become a woman?"

"I am," I informed Mandy before asking her to answer the door for me. I wanted this to be a surprise for my family.

Everyone was in the living room by two-thirty. After putting the final touches on my makeup, I walked into the living room to give them the news.

"Mom, Dad, Eddie, Rachel, Brian and Mandy; the reason I've asked you here today is that I have some news to tell you. Ever since my divorce from Kara seven months ago, I've been dealing with my own identity. To be specific, I've been dealing with my gender identity. Lately, I've been feeling more and more like a woman. I've been seeing a therapist, Dr. George, for the past several months; this past October, I was diagnosed with gender identity disorder. In other words, I am a transsexual. I am a woman trapped in the body of a man. I'm now at the point where I'm going to live full-time as a woman. From this point on, I am your daughter, your sister, your sister-in-law, Stephanie Elizabeth Erickson. The first name comes from our cousin Stephanie Smith; my middle name is from Aunt Elizabeth. I'm looking to have a sex-change operation sometime in the next three years."

"Why didn't you tell us this before?" my mother asked.

"Mom, I was afraid you wouldn't approve of my becoming a woman. Many people I know who are going through what I'm going through or have been through this experience have been disowned by their families. They haven't accepted them as the daughters, sisters, nieces and female cousins they've become."

"You will have my full support as you become my daughter," she added.

"You also have my support. I'll be happy to allow you to transition on the job," my father assured me.

"I've always wanted a sister," added Eddie.

"So have I," Brian said.

"At least we'll have another girl to do girl things with," added Rachel.

"I remember the time when your cousins dressed you up as a girl. I thought you made a cute girl then. You're going to be one beautiful woman when you complete your transformation," Eddie complimented.

"Why, thank you," I replied, blushing slightly.

"I'll give you a couple of days off; I'd like to prepare our co-workers for what's about to happen," my father informed me.

"Thank you, Dad," I said gratefully.

"I'm sure there's going to be many changes during your transition from man to woman," Mandy said.

"For one thing, I plan to sell this house; there are just too many memories of my former male life here. I'm looking to move into the city and buy a condominium, maybe a business of my own," I replied.

"If I know of a business opportunity for you, I'll let you know," my mother assured me.

The next day, my father asked all employees of his business to the conference room to inform them of the news. "I'm sure you all remember my son, Eric Erickson. He's been working hard as your accountant for the past six years. Seven months ago, he went through a very contentious divorce. Now, he's going through another major change in his life. He's becoming a woman, and has changed his name to Stephanie."

"Why would he go through such a radical change?" his secretary, Jenny Smith, asked him.

