

Ms. Z's First Reflections

(Note: This narrative by Ms. Z was originally published in 2013 in the book *Men Trapped in Men's Bodies*, pp. 4-6. It is republished here to provide context for Ms. Z's further reflections.)

In most respects he seemed to be a normal boy. He liked toy cars and airplanes, engaged in rough-and-tumble play, and did not seem to be delicate or effeminate. According to his mother, however, he showed an early interest in women's bodies and clothing: At about age 4, for example, he loved to stroke his mother's legs when she was wearing nylon stockings.

His first conscious memory of wanting to wear girls' clothing occurred when he was age 6: A girl who was his regular playmate had a ballerina tutu that he yearned to wear. The fantasy of doing so felt both exciting and shameful. By the age of 8 he fantasized about being a girl and wearing girls' clothing nearly every night as he lay in bed. Whenever he did this his penis became erect. He didn't understand why this happened and he didn't like it. He found photographs of women's and girls' clothes in magazines and catalogues; he fantasized about wearing these pretty clothes. He fantasized about having long hair and being treated like a girl and having a girl's name; these fantasies also made his penis become erect. He was ashamed of having a penis and wanted it gone. He fantasized about having an operation to remove his penis; ironically, this also caused his penis to become erect.

When he was age 9 he was sometimes allowed to stay home alone. He used these opportunities to try on his mother's clothing. This felt exciting and shameful. The clothes were too big, but that wasn't important; they were women's clothes. He tried on panties, bras, slips, and dresses. His penis always became erect, and sticky fluid oozed from its tip. He didn't like the erections; they were unpleasant and made the clothes not fit well. Sometimes fluid from his penis got on the clothes. He feared that his cross-dressing would be discovered, but he couldn't make himself stop. His mother eventually did discover

his cross-dressing; she confronted him and made him promise to stop. He stopped briefly but soon resumed, trying to be more careful.

His cross-dressing and fantasies of being female continued throughout adolescence. He hated the physical changes that accompanied puberty: facial hair, a deeper voice, genital enlargement. He was attracted to girls but too timid to date them. He envied their clothes and their lovely bodies; he burned with envy. His interests, however, were not notably feminine: His favorite subjects in school were geometry and calculus and his hobby was programming computers. He read about transvestites and MtF transsexuals but couldn't identify with either category. Transvestites were attracted to women and sexually aroused by cross-dressing, like him; but transvestites valued their penises and didn't want them to be cut off, which was not like him. MtF transsexuals wanted female bodies, like him; but they were attracted to men and were never sexually aroused by cross-dressing, which was not like him. His feminization fantasies caused a buildup of sexual tension, but his only relief was in wet dreams. He read that boys masturbated by stroking their penises, but he couldn't stand to touch his. At age 18 he finally discovered how to give himself an orgasm by rubbing against the bed sheets; he would masturbate that way for the rest of his life.

When he went away to college he finally had his own room and could cross-dress in privacy. He bought female clothes and wore them in private and occasionally in public; this was always erotically arousing. He experimented with black market estrogen. He liked the physical effects and found it sexually arousing to develop breasts, but taking estrogen seemed futile: He knew that he couldn't pass as a woman and that he would never be accepted for sex reassignment because he wasn't attracted to men. He reasoned that if he could learn to like sex with men he might qualify for sex reassignment. He met gay men and let them penetrate him, but he was simply not attracted to men and couldn't pretend to be. He

dated a few women during his final years in college but never had sex with any of them; he was too inhibited. He thought about castrating himself but couldn't find the courage. He wished that he could be normal but feared that he never would be.

After college, he overcame his inhibitions and had sex with a woman for the first time. He loved looking at and touching her naked body. Although her body was exciting, it was not exciting enough that he could ejaculate inside of her. For that he had to fantasize about being female. He did not fantasize about being female with her, just about being female; she was superfluous to his fantasy. He dated over a dozen women during his young adulthood, but he could never ejaculate with any of them except through the fantasy of being female. He tried having sex with very attractive women, hoping they would excite him enough that a fantasy would be unnecessary; this never worked. His female partners observed that he always "went away" immediately before his orgasm. He invariably felt miserable and depressed after orgasm, when he once again had to confront the reality of being male. He continued to cross-dress but found little satisfaction in it: What was the point if his body was male?

He discovered erotica written for cross-dressers but could never find precisely what he wanted. Complete, permanent physical feminization, especially genital surgery, was what he found sexually exciting, but this was rarely emphasized. Stories that culminated in sex with men seemed to be the rule, but these were a turn-off for him. His fantasy world would have no men in it. With the exception of occasional nocturnal emissions he had never experienced an orgasm in his life without a feminization fantasy playing in his head. He felt that some essential element of normal sexuality was missing in him; he felt sexually crippled. His obligatory reliance on feminization fantasies for arousal felt like a mental illness.

He consulted three different psychologists and psychiatrists about his wish to be female at

various times in his life, but none was able to offer him any solutions, nor even a diagnosis that made sense to him. Eventually he consulted a therapist who specialized in transgender issues. She told him that he might be able to pass as a woman after all and might even be a candidate for SRS. At last he thought he saw a way forward. He started attending cross-dressing conventions and gradually developed confidence in his ability to pass as a female. He underwent facial hair removal and medically supervised hormone therapy. He grew his hair long, learned makeup skills, and acquired an appropriate feminine wardrobe. He changed his name, started living full-time as a woman, and eventually underwent SRS.

She—a pronoun change is now required—was delighted with the results of SRS. She loved having female genitalia; she liked her body for the first time in her life. She loved living as a woman, too; she adored women and was proud to be one of them at last. She had her first awake orgasm as a woman a few months after SRS, masturbating the same way she had as a man. She still found that feminization fantasies were obligatory to reach orgasm. Her orgasms after SRS were less intense and harder to achieve, but at least she was no longer miserable and depressed after having them. Her body was finally as it should be. She dated lesbian women and other MtF transsexuals and had sex with some of them, but she could never achieve orgasm in their presence. She would have needed to rely on feminization fantasies for this and she somehow couldn't bring herself to do so. Eventually she resigned herself to celibacy, although she missed the simple comfort of another woman's body pressed against her own. She still has never had an orgasm while awake without a feminization fantasy running in her head. She still regards her obligatory reliance on feminization fantasies for arousal—her autogynephilia—as a mental illness: a profound, disabling defect in her ability to feel genuine sexual love for another person.

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