

## To Be Honest

I've always wanted to be one of the guys. Yet, I've been calling myself a girl all my life, even though it's always tasted like battery acid on my tongue.

I remember a cold January night. I was snuggled up between thermal covers desperately trying to get to sleep when I started reminiscing about that day's creative writing class with Ms. Englart. We often discussed current events and the topic of a transgender girl who wasn't allowed to use the girls' bathroom came up. Curious, I found the frozen metal of my phone and rapidly typed "transgender" into the cracked shards of the screen. I found a video that caught my attention about a little blond-haired girl, Ryland Whittington, who claims that she is a boy and corrected anyone who says otherwise.

While listening, I became intrigued. Things that are said matched what I had been desperately trying to grasp and understand. Although most kids realize their true gender between three and five years of age, I was not that fortunate. I've always felt uncomfortable: the only biracial child among mostly Caucasian kids in my town, slightly overweight, and of course growing up in such a foreign body.

Go back to seventh grade, I come out as a lesbian, feeling that maybe this could make me feel better and for a while it does. But it isn't enough. I begin dressing as a boy and cringe at the sound of being called "pretty". I sagged my worn out blue jeans, wear my curly black hair up at all times to make it look like I have short hair, and even put on Men's Polo cologne.

I lay still, taking in the fact that I was, indeed, transgender. I sank my face into the downy fluff of my pillow and sob with joy. I was finally able to identify myself. I finally knew who I was. Unfortunately, that happiness was short-lived.

The next step was coming out. Again. My mother almost disowned me when I told her I was a lesbian. My grandparents nearly died from such an “abomination.” And now I had to tell them that I wasn’t a lesbian, but actually a boy.

It was a week after I came to understand myself that I tell everyone who I was. I was horrified. I felt my hands get all clammy; I felt like I was on a jackhammer as I stuttered. I sat my grandmother down and said, “Mama, I hate who I am.”

She responded, “Why? What’s wrong, Pooh Bear?”

I said, “Mama, I don’t feel like a girl. I want, no I NEED, to be a boy.”

Her response was, “To be honest, you always felt like one to me. There’s nothing different about you. I love you.” From that day on, I became confident of myself and I’m not afraid to tell others who I am. And finally, I am one of the guys.