Avatars-8

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Alle regarded him, stunned speechless. How was she supposed to respond to that? How could she respond to that?

“I should rephrase that,” Chris offered, after a long silence. “My problem is actually something called gender dysphoria,” he restated. Chris calmly and carefully explained to her about gender dysphoria, a very real, very deadly medical condition. There were a number of theories regarding the cause, but it was as old as life itself. It was not limited to humans. By some quirk of biology, a small, but significant portion of mammals exhibited the instincts and predisposition appropriate to the opposite of their biological sex. He had been diagnosed with it a few years earlier. “They used to call it gender identity disorder. What it means to me is that I’m a girl born in a boy’s body.”

The current theories, he explained, pointed to a combination of biological and environmental developmental influences. Alle was familiar with the impact of biology on psychology. Every fetus began its development as a female. Its sex was technically predetermined by its chromosomes, but the genetic instructions were carried out through the release of hormones on a careful schedule of development. A fetus did not become male unless masculine development was triggered by the proper level of hormones being released at the appropriate time. What was true for the sex of the body was also true for the sex of the brain. At a specific point in fetal development, a surge of testosterone would cause the brain to adapt a masculine disposition. Those two key events were not always properly coordinated. Occasionally a male fetus would not receive the signal instructing it to develop a male brain, and occasionally a female fetus did.

Once the child was born, he or she would begin to respond to environmental stimuli, and gravitate instinctively to the stimulation that corresponded best with his or her neurological predisposition. The imprint of the brain would be transferred to the mind as the interface between the two evolved. Before a child was sophisticated enough to understand the differences between sexes, he or she was already conscious of his or her gender.

Chris struggled a bit as he tried to address it from his own experience. He had grown up different, instinctively identifying as a female. “I was never treated in a way that specifically encouraged or discouraged feminine behavior,” he said. “It just seemed that I was inclined to get into trouble. The things I wanted to do always seemed to be the wrong things, as far as other people were concerned. I didn’t get the message until I was about five or six years old. I’ve been in a living hell ever since.” He had been confident he would grow up to be a girl, despite the fact that he was being raised as a boy. He had not understood the differences between sexes until he was confronted with the biological facts. The facts changed his life, turning it into a nightmare. “I tried to adjust, but I just did not have the instincts of a boy. I was persecuted mercilessly, beaten and taunted by other boys. Every time they called me a girl, though, I felt secretly vindicated,” he grinned in remembered satisfaction. The brooding look came back as quickly. “It was a serious problem, though. Merely surviving depended on convincing everyone that I was a boy,” he related in despair.

His early start in martial arts had been an effort by his parents to give the boy the ability to stand up to the constant ridicule and abuse. He had met Jean, who had taken a liking to him and seemed a perfect role model for Chris. Their friendship, and common interest in martial arts, stopped the beatings and ended part of the boy’s loneliness. Alex had come into their lives around that time and cast a little more light and warmth into Chris’s life.

“I never had a clue,” Alle mourned, as he paused, thinking of what were happy days for her. His story anguished and outraged her. More, it did touch on what might be the tragedy of her life. The same kind of pressure had caused her to reject the expression of herself as a girl when it manifested.

“I’d already learned to keep my secrets,” he declared sadly. “I was always in fear that someone would see through my disguise. I devoted my life to perfecting it, studying you and Jean, struggling to understand what motivated you, and simulate it in my own behavior. Even then, I was a poor excuse for a boy.” He went on to describe the nightmare of adolescence. “You know what it was like for me. You had the same problem. We were both too androgynous. Do you remember the time we went to a costume party dressed as girls and got turned away at the door because they thought we hadn’t bothered to put on costumes?” he laughed bitterly. He told her that there had been a reason he had such an androgynous appearance. He had gone behind his parents back to acquire and take anti-androgens, drugs that inhibited testosterone, to prevent his body from changing irrevocably into something that could never pass for female. Eventually he was caught and had been forced to confront his parents with his problem. His parents had sent him to a therapist who sadly informed them that their son’s problem was tragically real.

“God, I’ve lived with this my entire life,” he cried in exasperation, “but I still didn’t know how to explain myself to you. My parents had such a hard time dealing with it; I became even more afraid of how you would take it. I’ve been wanting to tell you for years, but kept talking myself out of it. Even after you changed, I was afraid. When you left, you were still at odds with being a girl. I feared you would be hurt if I brought it up. Maybe even angry, like I was suggesting you ought to be a girl, take advantage of the opportunity I had wished and prayed for all of my life. I just let you go. But I couldn’t let go of what happened. I kept seeing you, turning into a girl in mid air, and I just couldn’t think straight. The letter showed me that you weren’t fighting it anymore. By that point, I couldn’t take it anymore. I had to talk to you.”

“I can see that. I’m glad you did,” she noted softly.

“The therapist brought my parents around. He buried them in the horror stories that are the history of transsexuality. There was a time when people like me were subjected to horrible drug and aversion therapies; some got permanent brain damage from electroshock therapy. All for nothing,” he grieved. There was no cure for gender dysphoria, he assured her, and the only treatment that relieved the suffering it caused was hormone replacement—and in an astonishing number of cases, sex reassignment surgery. He explained that had fought with his doctors and therapists to be allowed to take hormones to encourage female development and was saving money to have the surgery as soon as he turned eighteen. The fact that an appallingly high percentage of transsexuals who pursued transition fell prey to rape, assault and murder, or that an insanely high suicide rate for avoiding transition, almost made it a no win proposition in his parents’ minds. He pursued it simply because the only hope he had of feeling like he belonged in his body was to make it as close to female as possible. “You asked me what I wanted from you,” he finally returned to the initial question. With a deep breath, he got himself under complete control and answered it. “I came to ask you if you could turn me into a girl.”

Alle could hardly believe it. She believed him, confronted by his anguish she had not other option. But the idea that there were people who were literally trapped in bodies hopelessly alien to them was appalling. That people would desperately seek to neuter themselves just to possess an approximation of a gender appropriate form was utterly depressing. But now she understood Chris’s problem. He knew it was possible for a boy to change into a girl, literally. He had seen it. Her understanding did not simply cover that, but also the problem he confessed that her transformation had caused him. To know that salvation was possible, and suddenly be beset by doubt because he discovered that he was attracted to her in an entirely male way—it had to have shaken him. Or her, she noted.

“Oh, Chris,” she moaned, turning over in her mind what he had asked of her and feeling terrible apprehension. “Do you have any idea what you are asking of me?” she begged. From the day she had first gripped the world in her mind and altered it more to her liking, she had been confronted with a terrible burden. The power she had was hers, but the world she lived in had no place for someone like her. She lived under strict rules, rules that forbid her from using her power in a manner that could not be disguised or explained away. Olympus and Atlantis had taught her kind a terrible lesson, a lesson that could never be written down. Those histories would forever more remain forgotten myths.

“Are you saying you can’t?” he asked cautiously.

“I’m saying I could,” she responded. She owed her friend that much honesty. If she did it, she asked herself, who would she be answerable to? What exactly would she have to be answerable for? It was rare that a psionic was asked by a latent to use her power on him, but occasionally it did happen. Under those circumstances, the rules about using power on normals were modified. It was normally assumed that a psionic could not ask for permission. She would be exposing herself. In the rare event, that permission was not only given, but that the normal actually requested such a favor, it was the consequences of granting it that came into play. “I don’t have to tell you that there would be serious consequences if I did,” she told him.

“I understand. The same consequences I feared you would face,” he reminded her. In that regard, he was way ahead of her. Having lived his life in anticipation of just such a miracle, he had given those consequences a lot of thought. Surgery could not make him female, and it had never been what he had wanted. It was only the horrible compromise he had been forced to consider when his miracle never came. “Considering that I would happily die for this, I am not afraid to be reborn by it. I would have to create a new identity for myself. I would always have to be careful of the fact that I would not have a history to support that identity in fact. But that’s the same risk I face if I undergo surgery, but for a less damning price. The world has little tolerance for ‘inadequate males’ who pretend to be women. Since the world does not understand me, I have to hide myself from the world. To be female, I would happily bear that burden. I would even bear the burden of psi, and do this for myself, but I’ll be honest with you. I need this too much. This is too much for me to cope with, and try to cope with opening my mind at the same time. If I do open my mind, I want to be healed first,” he stressed.

Alle considered what he was saying. He was more correct than he knew. From what she understood now, he was far too damaged to tap and harness psi. He was like a man forced to cross a desert on broken legs, the incredible strength of his will proven by the depth and devastation of the wounds he endured. One way or another, he had to be healed to approach the burden of psi. If he could be healed, he at least had the blessing of having proved himself more than equal to the challenge. “I can do it,” she asserted finally. “The question we need to address now is whether or not I should. I’m not just throwing out obstacles, Chris,” she said quickly as he opened his mouth to protest. ”I understand how much you want this. If you had expressed no doubts, I would not have said anything about it,” she assured.

“Doubts?” he repeated

“You pointed out two problems, Chris,” she reminded him. “You described your conflict over how you reacted to my transformation.” Chris subsided as he recognized what she was getting at. It was indeed something he had been desperate to talk to her about. He remembered again how she had finally awakened a male instinct in him. His protectiveness, his desire to possess her and cherish her, to penetrate her and explore her mysteries, such were the things he had trained himself to mimic, and for her they had been real. He sighed at the irony.

“I can’t argue with you. Just as you showed me it was possible to be true to myself, you showed me that I could be a man. A very unhappy man, if I did not have you,” he asserted passionately.

“I sympathize. I face as difficult a choice,” Alle confessed, warming at his assertion. It was a bitter compliment, to know how much he wanted her, and how much it would cost him to pursue her. She considered the matter and made an observation. The body could have a tremendous impact on the mind, and the mind had the potential to respond to impulses that were uniquely male or uniquely female. “The attraction you felt,” she suggested, “is largely physical. The fact that you, as a person, a mind, were already attracted to me as a person, first male and then female, only proves that you desire me for who I am as much as you are attracted to me for what I was. Besides, sexual orientation has nothing to do with sexual identity.”

“For all I know,” Chris mused, “my circumstances encouraged me to become bisexual, to allow for my instinctive and acquired tastes.”

“If you really do want me,” Alle said thoughtfully, “it would both ease and clear your mind to have me.” She studied herself internally. It was not like she was throwing herself at him. He faced a very difficult decision. A choice that could change his life forever. That choice already involved her, and it was no different from what Anne had done for her. She could clearly see that he needed it, and she was happy to be able to help him. She prayed that it would help him. As a girl who knew a boy’s heart from the inside out, who better to help her friend explore this question?

Chris considered much the same question. It was intimidating. It was easy to fear that doing it, making love with Alle, would cost him his soul. It was the girl in him that was insisting that he do it. It was something that had to be done. It might make a man out of him, but by implication, it would have to make a whole man out of him. It was hard to risk the idea of himself, the promise of the girl he should have been. It was certainly not her desire to be a man, but she would not refuse to be healed simply to prevent herself from changing. The hell he-she was in was intolerable. Something had to change. He realized he could not argue with that. “I would be honored,” he finally accepted.

The conversation they had been engrossed in had been unusually intimate, even for them. It had removed the last of the dark secrets they had hidden from each other. Even so, they were shy as they first approached physical intimacy. Alle sensed that she needed to let Chris set the pace, assuring them that they had all night if they needed it. He darted out to his car to retrieve his kit and duffel and she let him into the house to take a shower, when he requested. Alle borrowed his toothbrush while he wasn’t looking, to freshen her breath. She snatched his clothes and hid them with her own while he was in the shower, and slipped into the pool to wait for him. She was grateful that Virginia had insisted on the expense of an ozone filtration system for the pool, which left the water sweet, clean and free of unpleasant chemicals. The wonderful, natural stone construction and artful rock landscaping brought her back to the cleft where her life had changed.

Chris emerged from the house shortly, lured by a silent call in his mind. He had to hunt for Alle in the complex watercourse, and then, when he spotted her, chase her into an alcove to capture her. The idea had been to dissipate the serious tone with which they had initially confronted having sex together. After the playful chase, they simply played for a while. It was nothing more than boy and girl, the silent courtship that aroused subtler passions in a dance of tension. It was a chance to remind themselves that they genuinely liked each other, and that they were friends. Alle enjoyed the play, waiting patiently for Chris to make a move.

Chris was keenly reminded of the day in the cleft. It was a bright moon, and not the hot sun, but it was a scene he had imagined could have played out if the moment had not been so shocking. He remembered his desire to meet and become acquainted with the girl who suddenly dropped into Alex’s place. He was happy to indulge in it now.

He advanced carefully, casually increasing the degree of intimacy in each touch. Alle did not let him jump to the thrones of her senses, playfully dodging if he advanced too quickly, but she did not put him off. He sought after the key to real intimacy, and discovered he could hug her—a very intimate encounter given their state of undress—but not probe for her erogenous areas. He settled for holding her for a while, cuddling happily, but finally realized that she needed a kiss.

She let him capture her face, and sighed as he brushed her lips with his. He teased her mouth with the gentle friction of a shadow of a kiss. Then he pressed his mouth to hers and kissed her like he meant it. He opened his mouth as she did, and met her tongue playfully. He sealed his mouth against hers, and pulled her under the water for as long a shared breath could sustain them. They were light headed and very aroused when he pulled them back to the surface. In mute agreement, they slipped out of the water.

Alle led him to a soft mat of clover in the atrium, and he pulled her down to explore her with kisses. He wanted to know every square inch of her, and the best square inches most. Alle had to push him down and practically sit on him to return the favor. Again and again, their mutual exploration paused as they closed on each other’s mouths for another extravagant kiss. Finally, they compromised, putting their heads in each other’s laps to combine the passion of their kisses with the exploration of each other’s sex. After proceeding so carefully at first, they became carried away. A long, consuming embrace in the symbol of cancer.

There was nothing shy about the way they finally approached the full union of their bodies. For the first time in an hour, Chris voiced a thought, a passing comment. He was a virgin, it turned out, but he had obviously given sex a lot of thought, and curled her toes with little effort.

They lay for a while locked together when they were done. Chris held her silently, mystified over the magic moment. In a sense, it was far from over. His resolve remained firm, seated deeply within her, and they moved gently in a sustaining rhythm. He had climaxed. Alle would not have stopped until he had. He remained hard in her for the simple reason that he understood deep down that he could at least think of himself as being in a female body. As if the contact loaned him the grace of that condition himself. It occurred to him that she could probably read his mind, but it did not matter. He had satisfied his true curiosity about her body. It had been a desire to confirm what he had seen. The girl he was really pursuing as he looked at her was the girl he had long wished to be. Finally, she asked him about it.

“Is this what you wanted? Are your doubts settled, either way?” she probed.

“It’s something I needed to do,” he replied easily. His feelings about himself had not changed, but he was much relieved to have gotten the impulse out of his system. “I appreciate what you did for me, I don’t want you to think that I don’t. This is very nice, but it is not worth giving up myself for,” he explained gently.

“I would never want that,” she assured him. She told him she could change him; it had been his doubts she had wanted satisfied, rather than her own. “But, if I told you that you would never be able to be a guy again, would you still risk it?” He assured her he would, without the least hesitation. Alle rolled him to his back and lifted herself off of him. She feasted her eyes on him. He was a beautiful man. Strong but delicate, soft but hard, he brought to mind a Tolkenian elf. He was bronze from the sun, his blond hair bleached white and cropped in a short androgynous cut that implied he was a boy and made him look strikingly feminine. He gazed up at her with amber eyes, a startling color that emerged when his hazel eyes could not decide if they wanted to be green or brown. Her hands played down his chest, thrilling him as they danced over his abdomen, and she looked closely at what she, and she alone would ever know intimately. How did his female mind deal with such an impressive endowment, she wondered. Paying special attention to what he was asking her to remove forever, she lifted him to the heavens and asked again. He answered the same. Pleasure was nice, but his soul cried out for peace within himself.

She closed her eyes and confronted herself silently. She had to do it. She turned her mind to the problem and took him into herself far more deeply than that proud piece of flesh could hope to penetrate. It was not a small thing he was asking for. A living body was the most complex weave of possibilities. In no part of it was that more true than in the brain. The fragile organ nested in its shell of bone was the most complicated and highly evolved structure in the known universe. For all of that, it was nothing more than a transmitter, the local node of a dual interface. The mind did not reside in a place, save possibly within the soul itself. It was the place that worlds resided in. It was this strange elusiveness that often led people to perceive the mind as an operating system, a neuro-chemical software package. Such coding did exist, and certainly, the brain itself was a powerful computer, but a three-dimensional object could not encompass a four-dimensional one. It could only exist at the surface of the intersection between the mind of the world itself, and the mind of the soul who lived in relation to it.

Existence was defined by a trinity, and that trinity was indeed divine, but it was a trinity of mind, space and time. Those were the three media in which things existed. Within that trinity, there was simply information, information that was static, dynamic or autonomic—matter, energy and thought. There was never one, but that there were all three. Of course, that was not the whole explanation. There was so much more that had to be understood, fortunately, she did not have to put it into words.

What she was doing was more complicated than turning a lock, or transmuting rock mélange into quartz and gold. Her mind had to embrace not only his body, but his mind. She could not simply change him. She had to engage him. It was the interface between him and the entire world she was trying to change. It was necessary to change his mind as she changed the world. Otherwise, he might not survive the change.

“Chris,” she called for his attention, as her mind started to work the problem. “This is going to feel very strange.” Chris gazed at her intently, and listened carefully as she went on, “I want you to relax, breathe in a slow steady rhythm, and picture yourself as you see yourself in your mind. Don’t try to visualize it, we hardly ever see ourselves clearly. I want you to just feel yourself. It will be hard at first, your body is feeding you information in a different format, and that will interfere. I am sure you are familiar with that. I suspect that is where the pain you feel comes from,” she diagnosed. She monitored him, shifting his limbs so that they lay straight and loose. “Good,” she said, seeing that he remained relaxed. “I want you to keep your eyes open. Just look up at the sky. You don’t have to fix your gaze, just roam among the stars.”

Chris blinked his eyes a few times and then began scanning the heavens calmly. She moved around and knelt down at his head. She brushed his bangs to the side and caressed his forehead. His eyes darted to her face for a moment, and she smiled at him. “You can look at me too, if you like,” she told him. His eyes remained on her features, studying her.

“You are going to feel me enter your mind,” she warned him as she spread her attention inward from his body, and seeped into his subconscious thoughts. She continued speaking calmly, describing the experience, to reassure him, “It will be something like sinking into a warm bath. Don’t be alarmed. I’ll just be supporting you while your body changes. After a few moments, you will start to feel a bit euphoric and your body will start to tingle and go numb. That’s when you need to focus on your image of yourself. Again, don’t try to force anything. Just think about how you feel about yourself, who you really are, and try to let yourself think and feel in a way that makes you the most comfortable,” she instructed. His mind was settling into her grip easily, and she cupped him gently along that second interface. Her thoughts then turned to the state and composition of his body, and she began to weave her attention into each cell, building a complex array of infinitesimal spheres of thought. Each sphere specialized itself to deal with the nature and characteristics of its assigned cell.

Certain of her grip on his body, she announced, “You’re starting to tingle now. It’s pretty intense, like your entire body is going to sleep. It almost hurts, but you can take it. You’re keeping your eyes on me. That’s good,” she assured him. She smiled down at him, as she tightened her grip on each fragile cell. She was isolating them, sorting through them rapidly in her mind, marking which ones would remain, which ones would be culled, cannibalized and used to build new cells. The body Chris would have would mass far less, so a great deal of material had to be discarded. Her mind was still working on his genetic make up, charting it and plotting out what other changes she needed to make aside from sex. Since she was tearing him apart and rebuilding him, it made sense to diagnose any aberrant alleles, root out dangerous or defective code, and refine the entire genome to maximize its potential. Chris had the potential to be a very beautiful girl already. She wanted to give her the best she could without making her into something she was not.

The preliminaries were almost over. She checked Chris’s condition and said, “You should be starting to go numb now. This is only going to last for a moment more. Are you finding it easier to picture yourself? Are you getting a stronger feeling of yourself?” Chris nodded faintly, surprised that he was weak with sleep paralysis. She smiled. “Alright, you probably can’t feel anything now except your idealized self. When you feel like you’re becoming solid, blink your eyes three times, and get ready for the best orgasm of your life,” she instructed encouragingly. He smiled faintly. A moment later, he blinked three times in rapid succession. Alle did not pause. Her mind locked down on every cell in his body. Like a ravenous dragon gulping down a succulent virgin, cell-node of her mind chomped down on its designated prey, devouring it instantly. Cell membranes dissolved, cytoplasm structures shattered like cities under nitrogen bombs, the nucleus shuddered and then evaporated like a planet whose sun had gone supernova. In one lightening strike, she had torn Chris’s body apart on a molecular level.

The boy stretched out from her knees shimmered and then vanished like a mirage. A silhouette of mist and ash whirled and then blew away and the mirage vibrated to life again. Chris reappeared as a phantom from the darkness, as Alle rebuilt her as the female version of herself. The trillion little dragons of her mind digested their feast and then whirled like tiny hurricanes, spinning long chains of matter, the finest threads of gossamer silk, which wove themselves into solid masses identical on this scale to those that had been consumed. Each tiny cosmos solidified into a mysterious and private world governed by a treaty that bound it to billions of kindred spheres. The awesome energy of each one’s resurrection subsided invisibly into the normal chaos of a cell’s life. The cell obeyed the new regime written in its heart as if there had been no revolution. The mirage finally came into focus and a young woman was staring up into Alle’s face, gasping an ecstatic breath. Alle smiled at her friend, and sighed. She kept her mind tucked against Chris’s, shoring her up while she regained sensation, and the endorphin rush of death and resurrection washed itself out of her brain.

It had only taken a heartbeat to do.

Alle had encouraged her friend to simply lie there for a while and relax. The girl had raised her arms, stretching lightly, and became engrossed looking at her slender new hands. She articulated her fingers, satisfying them that they worked. They obeyed her commands, so quite obviously they were hers. Chris sat up carefully, once Alle nodded her on, and examined herself. Her body was trim and taut, recreated in a condition matching the athletic investment she had made as a boy. Her breasts were round and firm, and her belly flat. Her eyes continued down, followed by her hands. Her eyes watered as she stared down at her lap, and her fingers trembled as they ventured to explore her vulva. The floodgates opened, and she was laughing and crying again, but this time with the sweet ring of joy. She quickly got hold of herself, and hugged Alle. As she let go, she lamented how unfortunate it was that she had not been like this when Alle was a guy. Alle smiled at her and explained that she still was a guy. The boy she had been was still inside her, and she brought him out.

Chris had seen this transformation before. In spite of that, Chris almost did not believe it. She reached out hesitantly to touch him, and Alle sat still, allowing her to explore him. It was bold of him, Alle told himself, but he had trusted his instincts. It had been clear, particularly considering that Alle’s mind had still been wrapped around Chris’s, that the girl wanted to explore her new condition. She had not hesitated to express her desire for a man to confirm her womanhood. Chris looked at him hungrily, expectantly.

She had regained her shyness, however, and retreated after giving Alle a second hug. Alle, smiled at her and said, “I know what you want to ask. What I did before, I did because you needed it. You need it no less now. I am not suggesting that you owe me anything of the kind, but as your friend, I would be honored to help you explore this.”

Chris swallowed and then grinned broadly, “You had damn well better finish what you started! I’d go mad if you didn’t!” Alle smiled back at her, and pulled her into his arms. For a long while, he simply held her tight. He checked her, to ensure she would not be able to get pregnant and contemplated how to break her in. It was a far different proposition from offering himself, as a girl, to a boy. His hours with Anne had assured him of the skill to pleasure her enormously, but he also wanted to please her. He wanted to make this first night as a girl worth all the pain she had suffered to attain it. He sighed at last, letting her go and stood up. Chris looked up at him in confusion as he walked away from her and turned his back on her. Something unpleasant crept through the back of her mind and she was beginning to dread, when she heard him call out loudly.

“One, Mississippi,” his arms rose, and quite clearly he was covering his eyes. “Two Mississippi,” he continued. Chris smiled in understanding and jumped to her feet. She ran to the pool, marveling that she did not fill awkward of uncoordinated at all. Alle was still counting when she dove in. Her heart was pounding with joy. She was a girl at last, and one of the two boys she loved most in the entire world was going to hunt her down and prove it to her. Swimming for all she was worth—just swimming was such a sweet sensation, the world itself caressing her body, confirming her, embracing her, driving it into her brain with every heartbeat, the message, *Chris, you are* female—she finally realized that she was alive.

Sixteen years was a long time to be trapped in a nightmare.

Alle finished counting and sought her out. He spared no effort to make her feel young, and sensual—and entirely female. He took his time, worshipping her body, drawing her deeper and deeper into it, healing her a bit more with every inch of her body that he seduced. He offered her a choice before opening her, but she embraced the pain of that moment, demanded it. It was a small token, an offering for all of the pain she had been absolved of, and it made the pleasure she felt after even sweeter. It was very late when they finally stopped. A quick swim freshened them up, and Alle reverted to her female default. Chris drove them to Anne’s home, and Alle snuck her into the house. She quickly explained to Anne, and they put the neo-girl to bed with them. Chris fell into a warm, fuzzy sleep at once. Alle confessed to her fiancée, that she had resisted Keith but exchanged favors with Chris whole-heartedly. Anne assured her that she understood, and that Alle had done the right thing.

Confronting Jean—and Chris’s Transformation

It was a Tuesday, so they did not have any classes to go to. Anne and Alle woke early to slip Chris out of the house. They had made plans to go shopping and Chris’s car enabled them to set out on their own. Alle had solved a problem for Chris but created one for herself and Anne. They were not sure that their parents would approve of what she had done for her friend. The world they lived in had forced their parents to impose strict rules on when, where and how there were allowed to use their powers, and this might well have crossed the line. They discussed it silently while touring the mall for must-haves and bargains.

While they were shopping, a visitor came to Anne’s house looking for Alle. Jean had copied the return address from Alle’s letter into the dojo’s database for his father before taking the letter to show Chris. It had not been hard to guess where Chris went haring off to, but the mystery of why had gnawed at him until he had to go after him and find out. He did not see Chris’s car there, but saw no reason not to ask for Alle. Alle might have already seen Chris and if not they could wait for him to show up together. At the house, he was told that Alle had gone shopping at the mall, and might not be back until dinner. Jean asked for directions to the mall and set off to find her there.

The girls had completed their preliminary tour of the mall, and set off for the food court to discuss their shopping lists. Alle and Anne had silently agreed that they would have to present their problem to their parents and face the music. The girls doubted they would object to Chris’s transformation once they knew the facts. It was a common belief among psionics that the division of the sexes had a lot to do with why people almost never tapped into their psi potential. Ambisexuality was not a prerequisite for psi, but the social and environmental impact of gender typing did in fact contribute to the atrophy of the mind.

Jean saw them before they saw him. The sight of Alle and Anne caused him to do a double take, on account of their resemblance, but the real shock was recognizing Chris. He flat out said it. *You’re a girl!* That caught their attention, as well as that of many other passers-by. Chris almost turned and fled. Alle caught her arm and dragged her along as they closed on Jean, before he managed another outburst. Realizing that they could not talk to Jean there in the middle of the mall, they escorted him out, nearly having to drag both him and Chris as they stared at each other in different states of shock.

Chris was worried that she was on the verge of losing her best friend, and Jean was just plain blown out of his mind. On the way in, Jean had spotted and parked next to Chris’s car, so it was there waiting when they arrived at Chris’s. Chris’s car would not start. That roused Jean from his stupor. He used his key to Chris’s car to open the trunk, and then went under the hood to return the battery to its proper place. He explained that he had not wanted Chris to be able to drive off until he found him—her. Chris asked if Alle or Anne could drive—Anne had gotten her drivers license the day after her birthday—and asked them to follow in her car while she rode with Jean and explained things to him.

Alle and Anne agreed that was best. In fact, Chris should not have been driving that morning, since she no longer possessed a valid driver’s license, and presenting her old one if she got pulled over would cause a whole world of trouble. Anne led the way back out to the new house, where they could manage privacy even if crews were there working on it. When they arrived, Chris and Jean were arguing. They did not get out of the car, and glared at the twins when they interrupted to tell them where to meet them when they came in.

Alle and Anne looked in and saw that there were in fact crews at work, painters and carpet layers. They picked their way through and found sanctuary in the atrium off of the upper pool. They debated for a while whether it was safe for them to indulge in their favorite pastime, and decided that most of the guys looked fine enough to invite into their little bower if they happened to get caught. The alternative was to worry about Chris, or worry about Chris and Jean, or worry about Chris and their parents. This was one of those times when worrying could accomplish nothing, so they teased each other’s clothes off and cheerfully distracted each other. Neither of them took the lead, instead, Anne produced her real twin and treated her lover to a threesome.

They were interrupted, but it was Jean, with Chris in tow, and the sight of yet one more of them amazed, amused and delighted the couple. The trio noticed that Chris and Jean were standing hand in hand, and concluded that a history of crossed signals had finally gotten straightened out. Alle introduced Jean to Anne and Anne, and let them explain themselves to the bewildered boy. While Jean absorbed that, Chris silently stripped down behind him. He did not notice until she wrapped herself tightly around him and reached into his pants.

Jean nearly jumped out of them. Before he could tell her to stop, she reminded him who he had told all of his sexual fantasies to. One of his favorites involved being overwhelmed by gorgeous blonds and redheads. Alle got up and quickly examined Chris, then Jean, and assured them they were both clean, healthy and none of the girls were at risk of pregnancy. Jean was no virgin. Nor was he intimidated by four willing girls. He did surprise them by stating that, tempting as the offer was, he only wanted Chris. Chris nearly fainted with delight.

Later, after talking and bonding had reached their climax, they reminded themselves that Chris and Alle desperately needed new clothes. Keeping three girls dressed would stress Anne’s wardrobe past its limits. They stretched the day to include all the shopping, a nice dinner, and a movie—the second in two days, Alle was thrilled to note. They arrived at Anne’s house at dusk and stopped to collect their wits. It was time to brave the parents in their den.