

A Princess in Training

A Play in One Act

By Cheryl Ann Costa

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This play can be either treated as a monologue or a one-act play.

The play version uses a metaphor fairytale before each scene, for a monologue this metaphor can be left out or the metaphor fairytale can be told at the beginning.

Characters

The Princess - 30ish to 40ish

Can be played by a male in matronly conservative drag or athletically built female in matronly conservative drag.

If the play is performed by a genuine transgender person they can perform the play in black sweatshirt and slacks and migrate into a black wrap-around skirt later in the play.

The Narrator

A mature-voiced person with a sense of authority. Dressed in a formal to semiformal look or an elderly, drag person in granny persona.

The set is at least a cabaret chair, a wing back chair with an end table, a glass of water, a clothes tree for small costume parts and a stepped platform or step ladder, and a park bench if possible; the director is at liberty to block as artistically as he/she wishes.

Costumes: assorted things to accent the character mode that she can shift in and out of, especially the bigger, longer personas

[Lighting: Special up on the narrator on one side of stage or the other.]

Narrator: Once upon a time in a far away Kingdom called New York in the Crystal City, there was born a little princess. Sad to say this little princess was born with an evil curse upon her head, *[beat]* For she was born into the body of a little prince.

All the days of her little life, she wanted to play with the other little girls of the court, but alas it was not to be, for it was considered improper conduct for a young prince.

When the princess became a young man in his teens she looked for answers to her questions. She scoured the shelves of the royal library and after a great deal of reading she discovered that the curse that had befallen her was really quite a common curse *[beat]* that is, as curses go!

After finishing her royal schooling, she decided to serve her country and king, and was confronted with a harsh realities of the world outside the kingdom.

Deciding to be as honorable to her royal family as possible, she decided to embrace her princely persona as best she could -- She went off to fight wars. She served with much zeal and great bravery!

Narrator: After the war she returned home to take a bride and to settle down as any good prince should do but the prince soon grew restless, the spark of a princess burned in the

heart, needing solitude and distraction she joined the Royal Navy and sailed the ocean blue.

Upon leaving the Royal Navy, the princess took a position with a Scientific Business that built large blue calculating engines for the realm.

It was about this time the prince started a small secret society for others who had been befallen by a similar curse!

Then one day the prince sought the help of a wizard who was skilled in counseling princely types who knew they were little princess's deep inside. With the wizard's help she took potions and powders that were compounded to help the princess within.

As potions and brews began working and the feminine changes were apparent, there was much confusion in the realm.

Finally the princess to be was told she would need the help of a special knight who was skilled with healing herbs and delicate knives to help her on her quest to become a princess.

As the fateful day of her rebirth approached, the true character of the good people of the kingdom was demonstrated to the princess. Various peasants and nobles alike each came and paid tribute to the princess soon to be.

With a special kind of bravery in her heart, she traveled to the Kingdom of Ohio to the Village of Youngstown to see the special Knight of Malta, who had expressed a willingness to help the princess to face her new destiny.

On the morning of All Hallows Eve she became the princess she always was!

...and the princess lives happily ever after -- But EVER AFTER is another story!

[The presenter leaves the podium and speaks directly to the audience.]

The Princess: That's the story that was enclosed in my Christmas cards the year that I finally transitioned from prince to princess. I didn't write it for my adult friends' kids, I wrote it for my adult friends in hopes they might get it in their heads that something remarkable had happened. In regards to my adult friends' kids, mostly they all read the story and said, "Gee, Cheryl got to be what she wanted to be when she grew up. Narly!"

But I just told you the fairytale, it's not uncommon that behind every fairytale there's usually an even more incredible story, indulge me and I'll tell you what really happened!

[The presenter retreats to a clothes tree and grabs a coat – Bogart-style persona - with trench coat]

Princess: I was born on a rainy afternoon. April 23rd 1952 at 2:02 p.m. to be exact, in a little mill town in upstate New York called Corning -- they make a lot of glassware there. Now, I wouldn't make such a big deal about when I was born except for the astrological ramifications. The astrologers say that all my stars are in something called retro grade -- meaning I'm sort of Aires and sort of Taurus.

They all say that my life has been interesting and will get more interesting by the day. You know there's an ancient Chinese saying for people with stars like mine, "You'll live the most interesting life." Do you know what all my astrologer friends say about my stars? *[beat]* They say, "I'm SCREWED!"

[The baby/little kid persona]

Princess: My mother's relatives all came from northern Europe and have been resident here in the new world since the middle 19th century. But on my father's side it's a bit more interesting, we all descend from Portuguese and Moorish "pirates" and hail from the a small group of islands called the Azores. My little Portuguese Madeiran grandmother is reputed to be one of those special native shaman women who all the village women visited to see what kind of baby they were going to have.

[Ethnic grandma persona].

Princess: Vertical for girls and horizontal for boys. When my son's wife began carrying the child, I began knitting pink booties *[beat]* of course everybody thought I was losing my touch when a bouncing baby boy was born. I continued to knit pink booties for nearly a year afterward, that made everyone think I was a bit touched *[beat]* but I knew better!

[The kid persona]

I think that my first conscience thought that I was a girl happened the moment someone told me I was a boy! Until then I really never gave it a thought. I wanted to play dress up with the other little girls and got yelled at for it. Then there was kindergarten where they wouldn't let me play in the kitchen with the other girls. There were two of us "boys" that wanted to, but we were forced to play with the "manly toys" like fire trucks and toy soldiers.

The real problem occurred in the 1959 when I was in first grade, I saw several of the little girls that I played with try on their moms lipstick so I thought that I would. These were the years of Col. Steven Canyon in the comic strips and on television, the original Mercury seven astronauts were just being announced, this was the time of the Jet Fighter Jock.

[Arms out flying like an airplane]

I wanted to fly jet planes!

Well, One Friday night I excused myself to go to the bathroom and while there I tried on some lipstick after doing my business. Bright fire engine RED! I tried to wash it off but it wouldn't come off!

[Slip back to adult]

I was 7 years old, what did I know about cold cream? Well, I soaped it off as best I could, and said "good night" to my parents. The next morning I was playing in the dining room when my mother came in with breakfast...She glanced down at me, stared and grabbed me and dragged me into the bathroom..."Mom! what's wrong?" I panicked. She called for my father, because as it so happened she thought I was coming down with a "Dread" childhood disease. By the time my dad got into the bath room, mother was just calming

down enough to see that the reddish marks around my lips were lipstick residue. She ranted and raved scaring me badly; then they asked me WHY! Being a good catholic boy, I gave them as honest an answer as I could, "I like girl's things!" Of course this was followed by more ranting and raving that the kid was QUEER or something, some finger pointing at each other as if the blame was their own.

[Wife style] "You did It to him",

[Dad style] "No, you did It to him."

Then my mother calmed down and installed this simple paradigm.

[Mommy style] "You want to be a jet pilot don't you?"

[Little boy style] "Yes"

[Mommy style] "Well girls don't fly jet planes and neither do boys who wear lipstick"

[Adult style]

I simply resigned myself to two things from that day forward,

One: Never, never, ever tell the truth about my girl feelings again.

Two: Don't get caught!

[the teenager]

Princess: By puberty, the nagging little voice in my heart would not shut up. But...what could I do about it? I lived in a sleepy, little, "sheltered-from-reality" type town. It was the kind of town you would see in a Norman Rockwell painting. I didn't have the slightest idea where to get help and I was desperate for information, I would have gone to anybody if I thought it would do me any good.

[All excited - grabs a chair turns it around and knees on it facing the audience]

Then one evening in 1968 Merv Griffin had on Christen Jorgenson America's first public sex change. I was absolutely fascinated with her, I listened intently to everything she said on that interview, and found myself identifying with her too much. Then she uttered a 4 syllable masterpiece! "TRANSSEXUAL!"

A big twenty five cent word, I quietly wrote it down and created an excuse to go to the nearest public library the very next day. That wasn't too difficult, since I was a geeky book worm by this time, and had adopted the role of the "teachers pet" and "library groupie" during my free time.

After performing an extensive search of microfilm and interlibrary card catalogs I amassed a couple of dozen books and articles on the new budding science of "Gender Reassignment." Being a book worm certainly helped in getting the materials needed for my fictitious "Summer School Paper."

Of course I read all the material cloaked in very ordinary books and magazines like Boys Life and The Practical World of Motors. All my reading gave me a great deal of information and brought my sixteen year old logic to three conclusions:

One: I can't leave home, I'm too young!

Two: Get educated and get out of town.

Three: If they find out they'll lock me up & throw away the key.

[beat]

So -- Don't tell my parents nothin!

Princess: By the time I reached the end of my high school days I was resigned to the idea that I must get a skill that would get me a good job later and the easiest way to do that was to join the service.

[saluting with Steve Canyon]

On one hand it was the Air Force with "Steve Canyon" for four years or the Army for two years as canon fodder in Vietnam. With a 1A Draft classification and a low lottery number the decision was easy --

[Running to the other side of the stage]

Air Force here I come.

[Strolling back]

About that time I read a very popular book , "Everything You Wanted to Know About Sex...but were Afraid to Ask?" by a Dr. Ruben

I was fascinated by all the different mechanics of sex, the stuff they never taught me on the street corner. Then I read the chapter about Transsexual persons. To my horror the author stated that..."TRANSSEXUALS were nothing more than MUTILATED TRANSVESTITE HOMOSEXUALS!"

A homosexual!!!? You have to remember that this was 1969! In those days many people including myself thought that homosexuals were weird perverts that chased kids in the school yards. That they had big nasty horns on their heads, how naive we're all were back then!

How was I to know that some day being gay was going to be respectable!

But to a naive eighteen year old kid in 1969, be homosexual that sounded pretty serious! I was stunned, and after all the positive reading I had done with the advanced works of Dr. Money, and Dr. Green and of course Dr. Harry Benjamin. This was the first time that it really sunk into me that I might be a "PERVERT." I agonized, for days I wasn't that, I wasn't a PERVERT -- arrggh

Then it hit me, if this ever gets out -- I mean if my family and my parents ever find out that I'm a "PERVERT", it will destroy them and dishonor them -- OH MY GOD!

[She crumbles to the ground devastated - then recomposes while getting up]

The next day I did the only honorable thing I could under the circumstances, I volunteered for Vietnam service. I would go to war and if necessary commit honorable suicide in the service of my country.

[A slow precision salute - drill sergeant quality to voice]

Something a conservative family like mine would respect. A dead war hero is certainly better than a live PERVERT!

[change to gentle energy - reflective]

Princess: You know, I've learned something about fate, if it's not in your stars, it's not going to happen, no matter what you do. I volunteered for all kinds of hazardous assignments, being a telephone line tech that wasn't hard, the trade of climbing telephone poles in a war zone gets tricky enough *[beat]* having people shoot at you from both side makes it even more weird.

After my Vietnam service I volunteered for a second overseas assignment, which got me promptly promoted and assigned to Korea. Now Korea in 1972 was a very well kept secret for those who knew how to enjoy an assignment in the orient. Being in a serious denial mode, I sought the company of professional ladies to reinforce my Jock war hero persona. But, my overly gentle and generous nature got me in good with at least one Madam in Kunsan. To the point where I actually had a room at the brothel. I see the questions on your faces, what did I do there, you know the old saying that it's nice to have a man around the house...I fixed the roof, worked on the plumbing and I even rewired the place. For this I was granted house family status along with my room. They must have figured me out early on because most of the women were very relaxed around me in a sense one of the girls, though nothing was ever said -- and YES I got all the Free Samples I desired!

Princess: One Saturday morning I rolled over and tuned in Armed Forces radio to hear that my hometown was under great amounts of water.

[Excited and in Near Panic]

"Hurricane Agnes!" With a Hardship Discharge in hand came home to help my family rebuild.

[Bogey Style]

It was about six months later, at a Christmas party, at my old Summer Stock stomping grounds, She was a heavy, with a voice like Ethel Merman, -- and Big Lungs if you know what I mean -- and Chemistry -- Very special chemistry -- a little Dating an Engagement *[beat]* and Married!
Yah -- Married!

You know when you doubt your masculinity, they tell you;

"Go join the Military, it will make a man out of you kid!"

If that doesn't work they tell you to;

"Hey kid, get married, make some babies and settle down, a good wife will make a man out of you.

[beat] BALONEY!!

[adult style neutral]

Princess: Both Kay and myself were being smothered by the little home town. We were looking for a way out...I met a Navy Recruiter who convinced me I would have a great career as a Reactor operator on a submarine...I bought the whole line and signed up for six years to attend "Nuke school."

Nuke school figured out that I wasn't quiet the mathematician they thought I was, while very smart, IQ wise, I had no affinity for math and they reassigned me to Navigation and Electronic warfare school.

It was during the emotional fallout from being honorably washed out of nuke school that Kay got me good and drunk one night and dragged the whole story out of me. We sought counseling and advice far outside navy circles, the diagnosis was exactly as I thought -- I was a Transsexual.

We both went into our respective shells of denial and just plain didn't talk about it at all. I loved her and she loved me, a grew a big Paul Bunyon type beard and continued to pretend to be a mighty sailor man.

Soon after, I discovered that I wasn't alone in the world. There were other "Special Sailors" like me. I secretly met one through a support group about 50 miles from the base. It just so happened that this middle aged lady was the Captain of one of those big bad nuclear submarines.

[jive]

Well, ring my bell sister!!!!!!

You just never know who you're going to meet, do ya!

Princess: I left the Navy in the upper 10% of my rate and having just been promoted to first class petty officer in under seven years, I had just gotten my two year college degree in Science and I won a breach of contract dispute with the Navy over a little matter of \$5000.00 worth of re-enlistment bonus they reneged on. This made me a prime candidate to work for a defense contractor, an hence I went to work for Big Blue!

Princess: I decided to start a support group, It was hard work and took a lot of the time, Of course I never let it interfere with marital quality time. There problems with a support groups like this ;

Cross dressers won't give you their phone numbers, instead convoluted lists of instructions to meet them at an appointed times and places, that they never show up for, then there's, pissy wives of the un-reliable crossdressers and last but not least, the Cloak and Dagger of sneaking around. It's the kind of thing that can really get you down.

[change of mood - solemn scene]

I decided to call upon my higher power, it went something like this, I was sitting in the park and I whispered a simple prayer, "Dear Sweet Goddess if this is a noble endeavor, please give me a sign." That's when I heard some people talking around me, I opened my eyes to find a half dozen people in the park looking at me. There on my shirt, in my hair and dancing all around me were Monarch Butterflies. I took that as sign of divine validation, I named my effort, "The Butterfly Group."

Of course later, someone told me that Monarchs migrate that time of year. *[Bronx Cheer]*

Princess: My corporation moved me to conservative old Virginia, to a little place called Manassas. The first thing I did was buy a tee shirt that said, "Welcome to Manassas, set your clock back twenty years."

While living in the hotel still apartment hunting, and not having my cats, I stressed out and sought the help of a therapist with specialty skills in gender identity. Did you know that in the Washington, DC area there in excess of 5800 behavioral specialists, I screened for specialist in sex and gender and came up with less than a hundred.

When I looked for someone experienced in Transvestitism and Transsexuality, they came up with less than ten.

When I eliminated the ones that knew less than I did about the subject I was left with two. I guy and a gal, I choose the guy because of an excellent referral. Harry and I, worked together from August 1986 thru the spring of 1989. We laughed, we argued and we got to the bottom of it all.

Princess: I started female hormones on January 4th 1987, I was part of test group of guinea pigs who volunteered to test a different method of doing hormones. We all went out and bought Purple Tee shirts with "Guinea Pig" lettered on the front. The doctors gave us 500 milligrams of Depo-Provera a week for 18 months. It was enough to castrate a horse, that was in fact the point. Within 72 hours of the first shot, I started to notice a difference, within three weeks it was like a spiritual revelation,

[she hold her fists toward each other from opposite directions in front of her, upon war the fists meet, upon spiritual drive - the fists turn into praying hands like a Buddhist, one side of her hands she talks about bad drive shift her head to the other side to talk about Kay]

For the first time in my life the war of the two gender drives was in a cease fire. Though, I had the sex drive of a rock. 18 months later Kay gave me a kiss, she nibbled on my ear, jumped back and said; "It's was over, You taste like my sister."

Princess: It was the middle of June 1988, I'd been on progesterines for nearly 18 months, I had decided that I never wanted to go back to the way I was I requested that my hormones be modified to include estrogen, Little Football shaped Purple pills. Estrogen is the natural chemical the triggers the development of most female sex characteristics. In others words the stuff that makes breasts growth, hips widen and of course PMS. Having been in a state of chemical castration for 18 months I was for all intents a pre-adolescence again. The estrogen quickly put me into a second adolescence. There's something to be said about going through puberty at 36 years old. I knew I was becoming a teenage girl, when my phone bill went through the roof.

There were these little knots on my chest, those achy little rose buds, hurt so much when I rolled over at night that I couldn't sleep. I had to borrow a couple of sand bags from my local theater group, to keep me from rolling over. The other big change that was apparent to my coworkers was the increase in my hip and thighs, egad everything I ate went to my hips, I should have just as well just stapled it there.

Last but not least, the brain chemistry began to change, my writing style changed, my thought patterns were in flux, my logic seemed to be different . -- Do women think differently then men, you bet, is it better?

NO, just different..

You know the biggest problem we had during the change, and I mean the biggest problem, was the conservative mentality of the suit types at Big Blue. You know that it took them 18 months to figure out what bath room I should use during my change. Finally, their solution was to use the medical dept. toilet area, OK in principle but not practical since it was a twenty minute walk one way to the medical dept., going to the John was going to be an hour round.

As if this wasn't bad enough, the head of the medical dept. refused to grant me electronic badge access to the restricted medical dept. In essence the only bath room I was authorized to use was in a cipher locked space.

I had to come to the window, and ring the bell for the nurse to come to the front window and Buzz me in, we worked out a little code, with that she buzzed me in from the back office area.

Ultimately, I bitched to a Black executive manager who after hearing all the horrors I had been put through, said. "Looks like we have you in the back of the bus, hon!" On my behalf he went to bat for me and they ultimately in grand Big Blue style they spent \$10,000 to build me a private rest room very near my work space. The rest room was known as the "IT Rest room."

Why was this all necessary you're asking yourselves, I'm told that the women all protested, cause I might be doing this whole thing to go into the Ladies room and peek at the ladies, the guys didn't want me in the men's room anymore, because I had changed a lot and was getting really femy, these guys all thought I was really weird queer, and they were all feeling wormy that I might be sizing them up for a sexual conquest. The truth was, I had the sex drive of a rock, no sexual thoughts entered my mind, nil, na da, nyet.

[somber mood]

The ugliest aspect was the rumor that I might have **AIDS**, I mean after all I was some sort of sexual monstrosity, **Right!** I must have really off the wall perverse sexual behavior, **Right! I must have AIDS, RIGHT!**

My work peers wouldn't sit with me, they wouldn't touch my computer terminal, they would sit in the same chair I sat at in meetings, they found ways to avoid shaking hands with me at meetings. When I moved offices, to a new building during an internal reorganization, they sent my desk and chair to the warehouse, cause nobody would use it.

[with a beat and with hard feelings]

I hope they got over it!

[recovering from the bitter point, moves to another part of the set - pregnant pause]

Princess: Prior to my medical leave, I witnessed several wonderful events, several Black ladies from the computer center took me mercy upon me and invited me to a going away lunch. They told me that it suddenly dawned on them that I was being treated worse than them. They toasted me in to the "Bottom of the Totem Pole Club."

Another, strangely interesting thing happened that restored a little bit of my faith in the human capacity for compassion. It was lunch time and I was working on some reports, and there came a knock at the door, there in the door way was an attractive high maintain blond woman. She looked at me and said; "You don't know me but I know you and I just wanted to come over and wish you Good Luck and to tell you that I think you're the bravest person I've ever met."

[she sits down]

Needless to say I was floored, after a few minutes of conversation it came out that she had done a paper on the subject of transsexuals while working on her master's degree and has been fascinated ever since. She said that she had been watching my signature change

from male to a female on the purchasing requisitions that come across her desk. "I just had to come over and give you a send off, Good Luck hon"
With that she gave me a big hug, smiled and left.
I sat and stared at the wall for twenty minutes thinking that this didn't happen, that the old purple pills had finally fried just one too many brain cells.

Then few hours later a middle aged and fatherly looking manager guy, came in smiling and ask if I was all set, I look at him and lost it, WAHHH blubber, blubber and water works began, that's when he gave me a big hug and held me until I calmed down. Finally he said; "Everything will be fine, go do what you have to do, heal yourself and come back and be as productive as ever."
WAHHH Blubber Blubber again.
After I composed myself, he gave me a thumbs up on the way out the door, "Call if you need anything!"
I never did call, but it was nice to know that I could have.

Princess: My surgeon was a well known plastic surgeon in the little burg of Youngstown, Ohio. He'd been doing a sideline in transgendered surgery for about 19 years, in fact he had pioneered the art of transition reconstructive reassignment in the mid-west. Of course Youngstown used to be a steel town known for Iron Men now it's known for Plastic Women.

Did you know that the real Mecca for transgendered surgery is a little place called Trinidad, Colorado, a little mining town that when the ore ran out and the place almost went belly up, was saved by an enterprising surgeon who revitalized the town's economy with tourist trade and bed and breakfasts by providing the service of Transgendered surgery. He also persevered the towns historical heritage as well -- Strip Mining!

The surgeon called me up in August and asked me when I wanted to come out and do it. I asked for 31st of October in the morning, he politely declined and said that he was scheduled to be a medical convention from the 28 through the 4th of Nov. He'd be happy to do me on the 5th of November. Now, This was one of those things I had a feeling about, I told him to pencil me in on the 31st of October anyway.

[German Doctor Style]

..".But I'm going to be at a medical convention..."
he said emphatically. With out hesitation I told him that the convention was going to be canceled...
at this point he thought I was koo koo.

[German Doctor style]

"My dear, these things are planned two years in advance they're never canceled, it would take and act of God.."

[SOUND: Crack of Thunder]

[Chessy Cat look - "butter wouldn't melt in my mouth"]

Two weeks later, he called me up and asked me if 8 am on the 31st was acceptable. I asked him about the convention, he said it was canceled, as it turns out it was scheduled to be held in San Francisco, but the 1989 San Francisco earth quake a week earlier,

messed up the hotel hence the convention was canceled. *[beat]* Didn't I tell you that you can't mess with your stars.

Princess: Cindy the nurse came in at 4am that morning to get me up for a shower and a twilight medication shot. They came for me at about 7:30am and wheeled me to the operating room,

[She sits in a chair sort of stretched out]

My surgeon was happy and pleasant the assisting surgeon had a troubled look on his face, like he was seriously threatened. He looked at me and said good luck and I looked at him and "GOOD LUCK." There was an unusually larger number of people in the operating theater, I asked why and was told that they were observers for training purposes. Bullchips!!! They were an audience waiting to see somebody get their penis and balls cut off! I know and audience when I see one -- I figured that I might as well be an active member of the cast, instead of a soon to be passive one.

I looked up at the prep nurse and asked if;
"anybody wanted to hear a joke?"

This brought the hustle and bustle in the operating room to a screeching halt.

"The Patient wants to tell a joke???"

with hesitation the anesthesiologist said sure

"Is anybody here Jewish??" I asked, two people raised their hands.

I have a Moyel joke, the two Jews grinned, everyone else wanted to know what the heck was a Moyel?

[she gets up for a time out. sort of a stand up mode]

OK, an explanation for the GOY- EM, A moyel is the guy in the Jewish faith who performs the ceremonial circumcisions, among Jews,

[a little bit Yiddish]

The joke is that the moyel does all the work and the rabbi gets all the tips!

That's not the joke;

Two moyel friends of mine a father and son team, were seeing me off at the airport to come to Ohio, The father comes up to me and with a good bye hug said,

[Yiddish style]

"Cheryl, did I ever tell you that we moyels have long had a Yiddish word for transsexual.

[adult]

I said, "REALLY???"

[Yiddish style]

...yah, OOPS!

[adult]

The operating room was full of laughter, the anesthesiologist simply grinned and said "GOOD NIGHT CHERYL"

[Climb the steps of the overlook, sit on the edge looking down on an imaginary setting]

Princess: When you go under general anesthesia there's this Abyss that you go into, a twilight zone of sorts. Neither here nor there, not now not then.

The actual procedure entails the splitting of the scrotum the sac, removing the testicles, Sorry!! I didn't mean to make any of you guys uncomfortable, after the castration they remove the spongy material that fills with blood and makes for the swelling that is an erection. They reposition the urinary tract plumbing and turn the skin of the penis inside out and tuck it in, packed with yards and yards of gauze.

Then if the Doctor is a good plastic surgeon he'll fashion a clitoris from the spongy material and labia from the scrotum skin, if he's talented, you can fake out a gynecologist after your all healed up. They must be done now, excuse me.

[She comes down the perch in a glide and sits where she was before going under]

I woke up in recovery room two and a half hours later, to the vision of a dozen clocks on the wall, there was this dull ache in my crotch and a throbbing on my chest. Gradually as I woke up, I became very aware of these two guys with golf spikes standing on my crotch and their pissed off pet pit bull sitting on my chest.

I pointed this out to the recovery room nurse, she told me tell them to get lost.

Another girl came into have the same procedures a couple of days later, she asked about the waking up discomfort I told her about the two guys and the dog....She laugh and blew it off.

Two days later I hobbled down to hall to visit her and the first thing she says to me,[Groggy] "The two guys with the dog say Hi." After a few days the doctor removed the catheter and simply said "PEE" and walked out. I looked at the head nurse and said; "How? Where?" she said; "In the bathroom silly."

Again I ask with more detail; Where is it? How do I do it?"

She looked at me and ask how I did it before,

I simply told her that I used to just shake it a little and it started, now what?

Well we tried for two days, being temporally catheterized several times a day to relieve me, but nothing worked.

There was nothing wrong, I just couldn't get the sensation.

Finally, I was bound and determined to pee if it killed me!

I asked the nurse for two large pitches of ice cold pink lemonade, and I guzzled them both.

15 hours later I still hadn't done it, so finally the resident came in with a tube to empty me,

[Scotty from Star Trek Scottish voice],

I begged the doctor give me until the end of his shift to accomplish the deed.

"Doctor, I trying to change the laws of physiology here"

I went to the laundry room and got new bedding and extra towels, you see part of the problem was the cold bathroom. I'd just get relaxed and I'd run in to the cold toilet seat,

[pantomiming sitting down then up abruptly]

I would get all relaxed then hit that cold seat and nothing.
Now I had a plan, I put extra a layers of towels under my hip area, covered up with a nice warm blanket and put my relaxing new age music and concentrated on relaxing enough to "pee the bed."

The resident came in again and ask me what I was doing,
with headphones on I shouted "I'M TRYING TO WET THE BED!"

He grinned and gave me a power to the people fist and a go for it!

[beat]

Finally, a pinch and sting and sweet release!

[She has a look of sweet ecstasy]

[Adult - mature]

I arose on Friday November 10th, showered, dressed, put on a face and was wheeled to the front door by hospital staff who became close to me during my stay. I was driven to the airport by a limousine, caught a jet and returned home.

On a cold November's evening with a roaring fire and a rum and coke, I wrote this story.

Since then , I've had many more adventures, with many more interesting stories but those events happen in a time called **Ever after**, *[beat]* you know "like happily ever after" .

[she reflects with a dark tone, like she's going to relate the story - but it's a tease]

In that fairy tale time called EVERAFTER, *[beat]* the fairy tale princesses get very fat have lots of kids and the relatives of the deceased dragon come looking for the shining knight who's, now fat, out of shape and has high triglycerides and is not as shining as he used to be. But that's another story --

[frank and from the heart]

Princess: I wrote this story, because you might know somebody or be somebody in a similar situation. I want you to you to know that there are lots of little girls out there both big and small, who struggling try to survive from a similar situation.

You might say they are "diamonds in the rough." So if you ever meet one, "**A Princess in Training!**" Know that God made them special for a reason and like all things special they are rare! *[beat]*

Know that God kissed them with a special blessing to be gifts to us all, so that we might learn **compassion** by knowing them.

She smiles and nods to the audience, ponders thought for a moment and turns her back to the audience walks slowly up stage.

[Fade to Black - Curtain]

THE END

A Princess in Training was first presented at Washington, DC's National Theater on November 4th 1994. With a follow on performances in various arts clubs and coffee houses in the capital district and Maryland.

*It was directed by Linda Bartash
Production design by Linda Bartash
Sound design by Linda Schaefer*

The cast was as follows:

*The PrincessCassandra St. John
The Narrator.....Linda Bartash*

A Princess in Training

For the record, I am a transsexual woman, meaning that I was born a boy person who felt like I was a girl person. At some definitive point in my life I fixed the situation, enough said. If you want the gory details, read the play.

So why did I write a Princess in Training? Was I trying to cash in on the weirdness and sensational aspects of my gender change? Not really.

My eighth grade English teacher who did encourage my story telling told me to “write what I knew.” But my dad also taught me that you have to market what will sell too, market what people want.

After my gender change in 1989, I found that people were curious. I began lecturing about the topic of Sex and Gender on the college lecture circuit. At these lectures, I used to pass out 3x5 cards to the audience of several hundred students. Each of these cards would find it's way back to me with four or five questions each. During the lecture I would do my best to answer the questions. After each lecture I collected those cards and put them in a big envelop. One day I sat down with a friend and we analyzed some three thousand cards from five or six lectures. There were perhaps a hundred unique questions in all. The interesting thing was that 85% of the inquiries centered around 47 basic questions. The other 15% related to very unique individual and personal questions.

One day in early 1994, the muses in my heart began their little dance. I sat down with the list of questions and wrote out “prompting 3x5 cards.” I organized them into subject sets that I thought made sense. After a few walks in the park to collect my thoughts I set up my video camera and stood in front of it and in an impromptu manner and sort of standup comic style; I began telling the story of my life to the camera based on the questions on the cards.

I showed this “work tape” to my significant other “Snow White” and asked for an honest opinion. She was a professional comedian, she began cracking jokes, very sidesplitting funny jokes at my creative performance experiment. At first I was destroyed inside and very nearly tossed the videotape off my tenth floor balcony. A few weeks later I went over to another friend's house and played the impromptu oral presentation. The reaction from her and her husband was very different; they were riveted to the television. Afterwards I told them that I was thinking of making a play based on the topic matter in sort of a standup comedy presentation. They looked at me in a serious manner and told me to do so. They insisted that people were curious and that the material would make a great play.

They went on to tell me that the videotape, as primitive as it was, had accomplished the task of answering just about every curious question they ever wanted to ask me about my life and the process of my gender change. I made a copy of the tape and hired a typist to transcribe the contents into a word processor format, so that I would have a baseline of the dialog to “punch up” for a script dialog.

My original concept for the play was to use a chorus of four actors, two female and two male and the androgynous lead to tell the story, with the chorus stepping in from time to time to become the people from my life when on-stage role-playing was needed. The chorus was going to be clad in black leotards and tights and was going to sit on bar stools upstage and don persona accenting costumes when interaction skits were to be played out. At least that was *the plan*.

In late September of '94, I received an unexpected call from a lady who was scheduling short performances for Washington DC's National Theater and a series they had called, "Monday Night at the National." I accepted the gig for two performances on November 4th. I called a talented director friend, Linda Bartash, and talked her into directing the debut production. After she read the work and watched the original draft concept in videotape form. Linda talked me into not opening auditions and further talked me into performing the piece myself as a one-woman show. I wasn't exactly thrilled with the idea. Living the life was one thing, writing about it was another, and performing on stage was something else altogether. I must for the record tell you that there were many tears shed during the rehearsal process for fear that I wasn't up to this performance effort. In the end the production turned out well and that effort motivated me to write and produce more of my work.

Where did metaphor of the Princess story come from?

I'm often asked about the Fairy Tale Princess metaphor. In November of 1989, a few weeks after my gender change surgery, I was home recovering and had run out of pain medication, I was a bit uncomfortable so I resorted to a home remedy in the form of some strong rum and Cokes. A gal friend at that time came over to keep me company and the two of us got silly. We fired up the old portable PC-XT word processor and wrote a Fairy Tale story that explained my recent situation in a relatively light manner. I included text of the Princess Fairy Tale in my Christmas cards that season.

Where did the title "A Princess in Training," come from?

While I was in transition in '87 or '88, someone gave me a pink bumper sticker for my little Yugo automobile that said "A Princess in Training." Since that time I have carried the persona nickname "The Princess" with some of my friends.

"**A Princess in Training,**" has developed a reputation as a high school and college level competition performance piece. Finally, the work has been performed in something like eight countries as of this writing and has been translated into German, Spanish and Flemish.