

ABBY

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Chapter 48 - Pre-Surgery

I finally asked for what I really really *really* wanted. I wanted it scheduled for when something unusual could be done discretely. I asked Dr. Christina and Tara to accompany me to the nearby hospital for a private interview. I had asked them as I had found it easier to sell someone else than it is to sell yourself. I wanted surgery for changing my voice. The hospital muzak played an old favorite of mine *Stand By Your Man* which seemed appropriate. I played it in my head as *Stand By Your Trans*.

I feared any such surgery could cause trouble. There had been occasional hints that some of the medical staff were uncomfortable with me. My sister-wives had insisted I have my teeth cleaned as part of my appearing more like a girl. Once when I went for a dental cleaning I had a guy in his mid-twenties. On a hunch I asked. "Are you uncomfortable with me?"

"Yes" he reluctantly admitted.

We arranged for a young woman named Friba to clean my teeth. Thereafter that man greeted me in the hospital halls with increasing acceptance and joy.

She noted when I smiled at her that my lower lip stayed at the edge of my upper teeth. She said my smiling that way concealed the tips of my especially masculine canine teeth. She cheerfully whitened them all, but something seemed wrong. When I asked where she came from she said she had fled the war in Chechnya. She had always been Sunni Islam and had been having a hard time here. America seemed safe, but she felt estranged and therefore unwelcome. She felt deeply hurt with the tears to match. She became a psychotherapy patient because I didn't reject her as had so many others. She had latched onto me. She kept at it using an immense amount of facial tissue in the process. I cried so much elsewhere how could I complain? I occasionally cried with her. Nothing seemed to work for her so I asked her if I had been doing her any good. Not the best psychotherapy method, but that's what happened. With tissue to her wet cheeks she leaned forward putting her other hand on my forearm in girl to girl fashion. "It's your struggles as a transsexual that make my problems seem less daunting."

Dr. Christina and Tara encouraged me. "Keep at it. 80% of the results could be just from showing up." The patient found a safe refuge for herself at a Mosque in the nearest big city, and the hospital retained a terrific dental hygienist. Through all this I had been forewarned there could be a distinct aversion by some hospital staff to me.

While they were working on my larynx, reshape the voice box in my throat and other airways. Shave a little from the bone under my eyebrows and use hydroxyapatite bone cement for building out my forehead for a more feminine shape. Extend and

round my chin forward and down while augmenting my cheeks using an image from a country singer as a starting guide. Her image and mannerisms on YouTube called to me by her animated smiles during her performances as she threw her head and shoulders around. Maybe narrow and lower a little the end of my nose. The list of possibilities kept growing.

A Wikipedia article reported men's index fingers were shorter than women's index fingers. My sister-wives doubted that. All of us watched other women especially among the residents. Perhaps only one-quarter to one-third of those women had an index finger as long as their ring finger. Their hands were much smaller than mine making mine noticeably masculine. I opted for lengthening my index fingers as a way to reduce the masculine image of my hands' large size.

The hospital staff became uncomfortable. They didn't want the wider community knowing about their performing a sex reassignment surgery.

Nor did I. This could affect the donations. State Medicaid could scream, and did. Fortunately this didn't qualify as full reassignment surgery being more of a major cosmetic job.

Dr. Christina paved the way with the best surgeon for operating the cyberknife machine. I had been a big part of raising the money for it. She fudged certifying that I had been in psychotherapy for the required amount of time before doing any such surgery as this. Our private thinking had separately developed into every Mansion House resident had been in therapy most of the time. We were only fiddling with my voice and appearance, not with anything more important and irreversible down there.

We had searched for experts and the chief surgeon had talked with them. He reported that all too frequently the surgery would raise the pitch of the voice, but the patient could never talk above a whisper. That became so unacceptable we all worked on finding better answers.

Dr. Christina went after me about my relationship with Kittie and my other sister-wives hadn't been documented enough. "You need a hipa."

I frowned. "Why in the world would I want a hippopotamus? Do we want an animal farm in the swamp? Is that the latest rage in children's stuffed animals?"

She chuckled. "No, silly. It's a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act document called a H-I-P-A-A release. It allows access to your medical records if a tough decision is needed while you are out under anesthesia."

I had to think. "Can I name you?"

Christina became adamant. "NO! Against the rules. You know that."

No; I hadn't known that. So I asked Tara who repeated that no. I thought hard about naming Danielle, but he had become too oriented on the rules and wouldn't be the right person for my feelings about me. With increasing frustration I asked my sister-wives who let me know they were annoyed with me for taking so long to ask them.

Dr. Christina became ever so grateful. Danielle wrote a fancy document. I only read the first half page.

My conversations with the Surgeon left the impression we didn't know everything we needed to know.

The Surgeon had been unhappy enough with what the Sex Reassignment Surgery people had told him that he kept on researching. He had discovered more and wanted an extensive personal interview with me. He became cautious about whether this remained my decision or not, which I honored. His biggest issue had become my voice. Did I want to sing?

I told him about my being on the church choir.

He smiled and gave me an extensive education on the human voice with emphasis on how the voice works as a musical instrument. His main concern focused on my vocal chords, and how uncertain fiddling there could be in the results. By comparison changing the shape of my voice box and air passages were more controllable, but required greater precision and more time. Seemed to him he could be building a musical instrument. He reported he thought we could get into a desirable range after talking with a hospital in London, England.

He thought perhaps that I had trained myself for a higher pitch and sent me to a speech pathologist. My vocal chords were at the shorter length of men and only a little longer than a typical woman. They thought my voice might be more trainable. My male countertenor voice had moved to the edge of the range for a woman's contralto. They called a National Voice Center leading to even more discussions as they listened and tested my voice. They concluded that the safest surgery would be altering my windpipe, voice box, and other airways with training after that. We both kept researching. I practiced changing my sentence structures. Women typically used only the upper half of their vocal range. I tried and found that very difficult. The surgeon finally found comfort in what a London, England, hospital kept telling him about very careful limited work on the wind pipe extending up into my larynx. I might not be able to yell like a military drill sergeant, but he thought I could sing. My inner girl in my head didn't want me yelling anyway.

I tilted my head a little. "How comfortable are you? For this you have to be at the top of your game. What can I do to help you be at your best?"

He betrayed his surprise at my question. He preferred a handshake to a hug. We had a firm handshake with my other hand on his forearm. My head seemed to be in the clouds as I walked out of his office, but I kept researching. I discovered the methods used to widen the hips became unreliable over time after surgery. In addition to reports from transsexual surgeries in the hips I found comments by women with boyish hips. The common methods were an inexpensive use of silicon or relocating the patient's own fat to pad the butt and hips. But the injections could move around into the wrong places. The surgeon reported what he had been finding. We met again in person.

To him widening my hips had become a professional challenge. Increasingly severe accident victims were being kept alive making surgeons do unexpected new things especially near the high speed interstate highways such as our location. He built his knowledge on those newer experiences with bone grafts and replacements. The typical wider hips of women came from the pelvis changing shape during puberty for pregnancy and delivering birth. He showed me images of the pelvis and focused on the two big bones. Both the front and back of the broad flat pelvic bone were anchors for major muscles. If fat or silicon wouldn't reliably stay in place any other way, he had been investigating whether could be possible to widen those pelvic bones. Could they

be made into an anchor for adding to my thighs. His voice became more seriousness. "No, I'm not talking about dividing your pelvis and splicing in new sections."

I hadn't fully taken in that thought when he pointed at his computer screen. I would become unhinged later. The outer edge of the largest hip bone called the Ilium remained relatively free of muscle and other attachments. He thought out loud if a prosthetic artificial bone could be created and attached across the top and around that curve. Various muscles made the thigh bone hard to reach. But the elderly had the ball of the thigh bone replaced all the time where it fit into the hip socket. Could that bone be severed for splicing in a section? He didn't like the idea of reducing the actual weight bearing strength, and it would be out of proportion with my natural Ilium. My upper hip wouldn't be right in proportion to my wider hip below. A projection of the thigh bone at the hip called the Greater Trochanter might be free of too much muscle attachment. Could he research adding attachments in two places on both sides? He asked. "How important is widening your hips to you?"

I responded. "I just wanted my voice changed and this thing grew. Now that we're here, I would like to wear a girl's mottled blue bathing suit I found on the internet. I think about it fondly. Costume artificial hips and thighs can't be used with that bathing suit, and those move around too much under my clothes anyway." I stood up and pushed at those through my dress showing him. "Can you keep researching?"

Everything kept moving along peachie keen until they ran one more test finding I had Hepatitis C. That typically incubates for decades before bursting forth in all of its liver destroying glory.

"Yikes!" I reacted. "How could I have contracted that?"

He didn't think the trip into Mexico could be a likely source. That infection didn't travel through personal contact. He wanted and they did test other residents where they discovered it had spread widely through the Mansion House. That meant the dining hall had somehow caused a nearly 100% infection rate.

State Medicaid screamed near the top of the scale, plus a big fat "no way". The new and only effective Hepatitis medication cost \$6,000 a month times eighty seven residents and a similar number of restaurant paid staff and volunteers became a great big monthly amount of at least \$900,000, and an astronomical over ten million a year.

The hospital screamed right back at the State government that the Residents all had Medicaid disability coverage. Danielle drafted a law suit.

Calmer minds prevailed.

Kittie supported me on this, but insisted this surgery had to be my decision. Dr. Christina and Tara were the same way. They let me talk, but wouldn't debate. Dr. Christina called me down on why this surgery didn't frighten me. But it didn't. She noted that I watched Kittie during these discussions. Did I use Kittie's feelings for any missing feelings of my own? I didn't know that. She had read about how military paratroopers cut off their feelings as the airplane approached the jump. I tilted my head. I didn't know that either, but that could be possible. She thought that might be exactly what I had been doing like a guy. She asked would I watch for any fright or panic in myself.

Dr. Christina found a psychology intern who had been an army paratrooper. He talked me through the experience of a military parachute jump. He put body language

into it as he described how the nine steps for a parachute jump carried the troopers through their fear. I thanked him and told him how terribly impressive that seemed. Dr. Christina, my sister-wives, and I named my surgery "the jump" without knowing how well I might or might not like my new body shape.

I searched for internet reports of a parachute jump. I read and fantasized of the thundering noise in the thin skinned military airplane, and going to sleep suppressing fear. The terror spiked when jumping out the side door into the wind and prop blast. Yes, that fear suppression seemed to be my experience heading into this surgery. My sister-wives, Dr. Christina, Tara, and all of their students didn't laugh at me.

I had Kittie come with me to another meeting with the Surgeon. He wanted to know her in advance in case an unexpected awkward development intruded. The more he found out about her dressing me the more he wanted to know what she thought. The more she talked the more intense his interest became.

He asked. "Under those artificial hips, what are your measurements and real shape?"

Kittie and I exchanged a glance. I nodded at Kittie and she told him of my diapers making a unique method of padding my butt for a more female shape there.

Even as a guy suppressing his emotions that story surprised him sending him through an emotional loop. "OK. Take off everything down to your bra and panties. Measurements are needed."

Instead I sent him images of my nude body with measurements from the changing and pumping station.

He expressed surprise at how my masculine hips were wider than my waist from Kittie's watching my diet so carefully. He reported my waist to hip ratio of a point nine or so. He brought an internet page to his computer screen which we read together. Over many centuries and cultures a ratio of .7 or .8 of the waist to the hips had been the most attractive for women. So, what did I want?

Of course I didn't know. Kittie wouldn't tell me what she thought. Anger flashed across her face on this. I asked him to keep researching how to conduct this surgery and make a recommendation. After all, he had always been a guy, and maybe this question of being attractive needed to know what the guys deemed sexy. He didn't like that, but he kept working at it.

He discussed what hormone treatments had I been using. He had discovered that women's ratio of estrogen and testosterone was almost a ten to one inversion in the ratio with men. That ratio made men's muscles stronger and moved the women's fat to their hips, butts, thighs, breasts, and under their skin. He sent me to an endocrinologist who adjusted my hormone treatments and frequently monitored the levels in my blood. That office became super sensitive to all the adverse effects overdosing on hormones could cause in my health. They adjusted my estrogen dosages until it became ten times higher than a man's typical natural level. They conferred with the Surgeon and he thought that new hormone ratio might add fat where my new shape needed it. That is if he could create the supporting bone structure.

What became obvious is the bone work could be reliably controlled, but we wouldn't know the result of the vocal work for weeks or months. We would find out later

what more could be needed.

The surgical staff kept doing more than just the usual call for that cyberknife machine. After evaluating my new voice they might do more with my vocal parts. They tried their best for me to go to a sex reassignment surgeon with a good reputation. But all my sister-wives and I together had nowhere near that kind of wealth for private surgery. I refused asking the Mansion House Finance Task Force for money although Tara told me she thought they would. And more so for what they were saying about the outside costs for widening my hips and thighs.

The surgeon told me this would require a team. He would do the intricate work on my voice, but would step back before it became too much fatigue on him. His resident assistants would do the bone work. The CT Scan and UltraSound technicians must have been tiring of so many increasingly tedious measurements of the periphery of my hip bone. They cheerfully put up with my returning so often. One of them told me I had made myself fun to work with which the typical patient didn't do.

All that bone talk led to a revisit about my chin being narrower than many men. Would it seem out of place after raising my cheeks and reshaping my forehead? The surgeon had several computer images of what I could look like with and without narrowing my jaw. Narrowing my jaw would also throw my upper and lower molars out of their natural fit and alignment. He could divide my jaw in front, remove a measured amount, and put it back together. He had asked around and had been told the healing from that usually took about a week, but things could go wrong. That didn't seem so great. We eventually decided to taper the outer edge of my jaw bone a little while rounding the new extended chin with an artistic touch. My teeth would match that way.

Finally, we were ready. That meant finding someone to serve as Chair of the Mansion House. The Vice-Chair Tara told me no. We held a big evening meeting on needing a new Chair. No one volunteered. Comments came from the residents such as "aw shucks, Cindi, this place won't fall apart with your taking a two week vacation. The Executive Committee oughta have enough rubber cement, duct tape, and bailing wire by now" *meaning to hold everything together*.

Tara intervened. "Look you swamp critters all snug in your diapers. I get it. The Chair of the Finance Board designates a member from that board." We had recently upgraded the Finance Task Force to a full board. I had been very relieved by the change. "Or else." She didn't disclose what the 'or else' could include. Two minutes later she nominated Karli who served as Chair of the Finance Board.

Karli objected. She couldn't serve as two chairs at the same time.

Danielle from a back dark corner told her that she could. He seconded the Motion. No one said a thing. He called the question, but no seconded that. Finally Tara nudged Barbie-Doll in his diapered butt who seconded the motion to call the question.

The votes on the call and the nomination were swift. Karli had become the new Chair. I almost sagged with relief.

Back at the hospital, the surgery staff heard the patient had been instrumental in raising the money for the hospital and the expensive equipment. They didn't believe it and found out who I really had been at the Mansion House. More impressive for them I had been the girl who arranged visitors for the big donors when they or their family members were patients in the hospital. They fell all over themselves whisking me

around to blood tests to more forms to yet more tests including those expensive scans and ultrasounds. I thought they over did it, but they insisted. There were shocked faces when they compared my name and image to my gender on the paperwork. Oh well.

The anesthesiologist turned out to be a short round Hispanic woman with the warm hands and engaging smiles of the women among our immigrants. "You don't need general anesthesia for cyberknife." She didn't know the whole story.

I asked. "Do you know who I am?"

"Says here Cindi Metzler with your picture." Apparently she didn't know.

I had become braver with quick disclosures of myself. "I'm the transsexual who raised so much money for this hospital."

She pulled her head back in shocked embarrassment as her eyes scrunched up with tears and her free hand covered her mouth. "I never thought I would ever meet anyone as brave as you." She just stood there with her hand on my arm as if we were girl friends as she tried expressing herself. "You motivated my sister to attend college."

"My sister-wives and others will tell you I can be hard to control. Please don't risk it. What we have had to do so far is enough for being brave. Please, just for me."

She looked at her clip board of forms as tears dripped on her notes. She nodded while scribbling. I gave her the hug she needed right then.

I insisted Kittie come into the pre-op prep room with me before dawn after the initial calming medicine and before they put me out. Even with that cyberknife usually being used without all the surgery prep or heavy anesthetics, I didn't trust me. All that work on my hips, neck, and face would require full potency anesthetics knocking me out. After removing my damp diaper they slipped a catheter in me, but I didn't feel it. Had they used too much for that first dose of anesthetics? I couldn't be diapered for the surgery on my hips. They used silicon pads for breast enlargement of others, but I already had big lactating breasts. They would have to pump those during my surgery.

Kittie made a stand. She asked, she insisted, that I had ordered to be strapped down securely. Ankles and wrists weren't enough, so also knees, chest without the bra, and strong padding around my head. What they didn't know is how much I trusted Kittie to restrain me for erotic fun, but this seemed important. I became dopier as this went on. They put my body on a narrow pad elevating my hips up out of the mattress. All I remember was a very determined face on the usually timid Kittie. She waved my medical power of attorney around in the air, and horrified a nurse. They did it strapping me down preventing any jumping around and any twitching. Kittie made them tighten the straps some more and more again. That cyberknife machine could be too good. If I moved, it would cut the wrong thing which could literally be my throat.

The staff talked to me as if I could respond intelligently, or competently. The calming medications had taken over. I mumbled "stop." I couldn't make a complete sentence. Instead I slurred. "Kittie decide." I heard them say they had overdosed me on the calming medications following my comments I could be hard to control.

That wonderful anesthesiologist added a different fluid line to the Y junction for the needle in my hand. I went out so fast I don't even remember counting past six.