

## Laura

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### Chapter 24 - Happiness But Without The Parents

I wrote both of my parents the same e-mail message:

“I have met someone wonderful named Laura. I would like you to meet her up here in Baltimore. We each have a business with growing pains that requires our constant and frequent attention. You can find mine on the Internet as Laurel Medical Delivery Services.

“We are planning our wedding and would love you to attend which means knowing when you are available.

“But before that, you might be very unhappy with me and I do not want to cause you any pain. I am a functioning cross dresser for other reasons and always wear women’s clothing at all times. I have changed my facial appearance and hair to match. Our friends from the lesbian and transgender communities are expected to be prominently in attendance. Some of them are very grateful loyal employees and we simply can not ignore them.

“Both Laura and I are active in different AA groups. The fun crowd at the reception may be at the non-alcoholic bar instead of the traditional bar.

“We are active at a traditional church. You can see what it looks like on the internet as Powder Falls UCC.

“I have changed my name to Mindy matching how I look now.

“Would love to see you. Can you drive up here and meet Laura?”

They declined, which although that hurt, hurt a lot, may have been just as well.

I received warm support at the AA and church transgender groups who intensely understood my pain.

Karyn the Senior Pastor at the Church was happy for us. She was glad we wanted to proclaim our vows in The Lord’s House instead of slinking off to some dark

banquet room. After our first meeting with her we filled in the questionnaire they used for couples being married, and we were truthful. At our second meeting her praise for our bravery in our against-the-grain lifestyle was so much it almost got in the way.

I was astounded a Pastor could accept us knowing who we were. They really did mean that slogan in nearly every Sunday bulletin. It read 'no matter who you are, or where you are on the path of life, you are welcome here'. I cried all over again when she quoted that to us.

Something new from each of us came up in those sessions with the Pastor. From Laura she had discovered her dominating desires came from a deep seated anger she tried to ignore. From myself my lack of any desire to do anything made everything that ever came along to be an intolerable imposition causing just as much anger. Both of us had found our AA groups to be productive by not quite confronting us when we had not been ready.

The Pastor had a thought on that. "Are each of you truly ready to be married to anyone? In most marriages that work people become friends before they have sex. But you were the opposite. Are you friends now?"

Laura spoke first. "We have to work on that."

I agreed, and we moved on to other subjects with the Pastor.

Laura and I spent hours and hours on what to wear. The closest we could find was Lesbian same-sex weddings where they all seemed to wear business suits. Laura found a chiffon blue she liked, but not quite enough to buy it.

I put my hand on Laura's forearm. "I'm getting frustrated. Didn't you as a little girl fantasize about a white wedding gown." She nodded reluctantly. "Than that is what I want you to wear." She clamped her mouth shut and steamed.

What she was really mad about was her parents refusing to attend a wedding of her marrying someone with an obviously woman's name and image. She hadn't even tried mentioning cross dresser. The next week we returned to the subject of what to wear. She hesitantly said she had wanted a white wedding gown as a little girl until her sexuality got all confused as a teenager.

I put my hand under her chin and brought her face up to make eye contact. I was surprised she let me do that. "This is your daughter Mindy talking to you as a grown up. Mommy, I want you to have a wedding you can put into a photo album. One that you have fond memories of and are proud of. This is your struggle, which I honor, but I think that long ago fond wish is what the little secret girl in you wants. Yes?"

She broke down, whimpered, and burst out crying.

Her struggle was so impressive that I decided to wear a white wedding gown too. I wore women's clothing all the time, and what else would I do with my breasts? My bust was too big for hiding inside a well fitted man's tuxedo jacket.

Every bridal salon within range refused to have us as customers.

A lesbian at Laura's AA group suggested a private label women's clothing rep. On that other little reason we had been rejected, Laura's friend suggested my wearing a black leotard over my costume hips. That lesbian had said they would hardly notice my butt and midriff bulges. That worked.

We had sleeves as my masculine upper arms just didn't look quite right in a sleeveless gown.

Our trans-men friends provided the stand in for fathers for walking down the aisle to the traditional wedding march. They stood up front with our other friends as witnesses as we never could figure out who would be the bridesmaids or grooms. Laura's lesbian AA group were not real keen on the subtle sexism their perceived in the bridesmaid tradition, and my transgender AA group was also uncomfortable.

Our AA friends did chauffeur us in separate cars to church that morning. The lesbian who helped Laura pump her breasts and dress in her gown was no big deal, but who would help me? One of the regulars at Laura's group was a former Nurse before they found her out. She was cool as a cucumber pumping my breasts and changing my diaper just before putting pantihose, a bra, and that closely fitting gown on me. Wow, did I look good in the mirror with my hair having been done the day before with my nails. She even touched up my makeup, lipstick, and brushed my hair. She held my hand as I stood up and struggled up the stairs in the tight fitting skirt of that gown.

Laura and her escort were first down the aisle. Then it was my turn. I overcame my anxieties washing down my back and hooked my arm in my escort's arm. Her woman's pace under her masculine exterior was perfect. We walked with dignity down that aisle. I was so anxious and scared I didn't dribble into my diaper during the ceremony.

Pastor Karyn and our witnesses were waiting up front.

"Do you Laura take Mindy as your live long partner and sister-husband, to have and to hold, to cherish and to love? In sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer, in good times and bad, until death do you part?"

She squinted almost in tears. "I do."

"Do you Mindy take Laura as your live long partner and sister-wife, to have and to hold, to cherish and to love? In sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer, in good times and bad, until death do you part?"

My voice failed me barely allowing me to whisper. "I do."

Pastor Karyn didn't think we should say daughter-husband and mommy-wife at a wedding with vows as equals. So we invented those vows.

We lifted each others' veil and gave each other a lengthy kiss. One of the trans-women served as our ring bearer which included earrings. He was proud of his feminine appearance applied to this role. Our hands were nervous as we hooked those earrings into each others' ear lobes. By comparison slipping a ring on each other was easy.

As we turned and faced the audience holding hands I had a good use of my diaper. Later Laura said that right then she knew what I was doing and had wished she had thought of wearing one herself. It sure beat struggling with that closely fitted gown in a restroom.

By having the delicious Deacon's Punch as the popular non-alcoholic drink at our reception, we finally learned the recipe. It was just a 50/50 mixture of ginger ale and pineapple juice over lots of ice cubes in a punch bowl.

Pastor Karyn went to the podium in the church community room where we were holding our reception. She made a little speech about how surprised she had been learning about us, and how brave we were with the way we led our lives. Walking among the guests she had heard so often how many guests had never known there was such a thing as an 'open and affirming' church. Or that this church was one. Or that slogan in our program of 'no matter who you are, or where you are on the path of life, you are welcome here'. She explained that slogan was in every Sunday bulletin. "All of you are welcome here any time."

She told a little homely of a story about Jesus of Him sitting in a contemporary church kitchen. The church front door was gilded, but the back door out of the basement kitchen was ajar and rusty. There was an unending line of the hungry homeless in tattered clothing out that back door. The tiles in that kitchen were cracked and the equipment was dinged. There was Jesus sitting cross legged on an old table with matted beard, gnarled fingers, and knobby knees. But no matter what language was spoken in that line outside, the crowd got His message. "Everyone matters; no exceptions."

I scrunched up with tears.