

by Amanda Hawkins

In the Green Room

“Well, that’s it. The whole damn world knows. I sure hope you’re happy.”

“What an awful thing to say. It was just a bit of fun, that’s all. It was *his* idea.”

“Yeah, after you made him your ‘pretty little princess’ every chance you had.”

“That’s not fair. Everyone dresses up at Halloween. It wasn’t—”

“It wasn’t just Halloween! What about that school play in sixth grade? He was a *fairy*, for God’s sake.”

“It was the teacher’s idea. They didn’t have enough girls, and he was—”

“Yeah, yeah. ‘But he’s just *so* pretty.’ But you’re the one who sent him to the party dressed like that Disney chick.”

“Hannah Montana. It was a costume party, wasn’t it? What was I supposed to do? Stuff him into your old football uniform?”

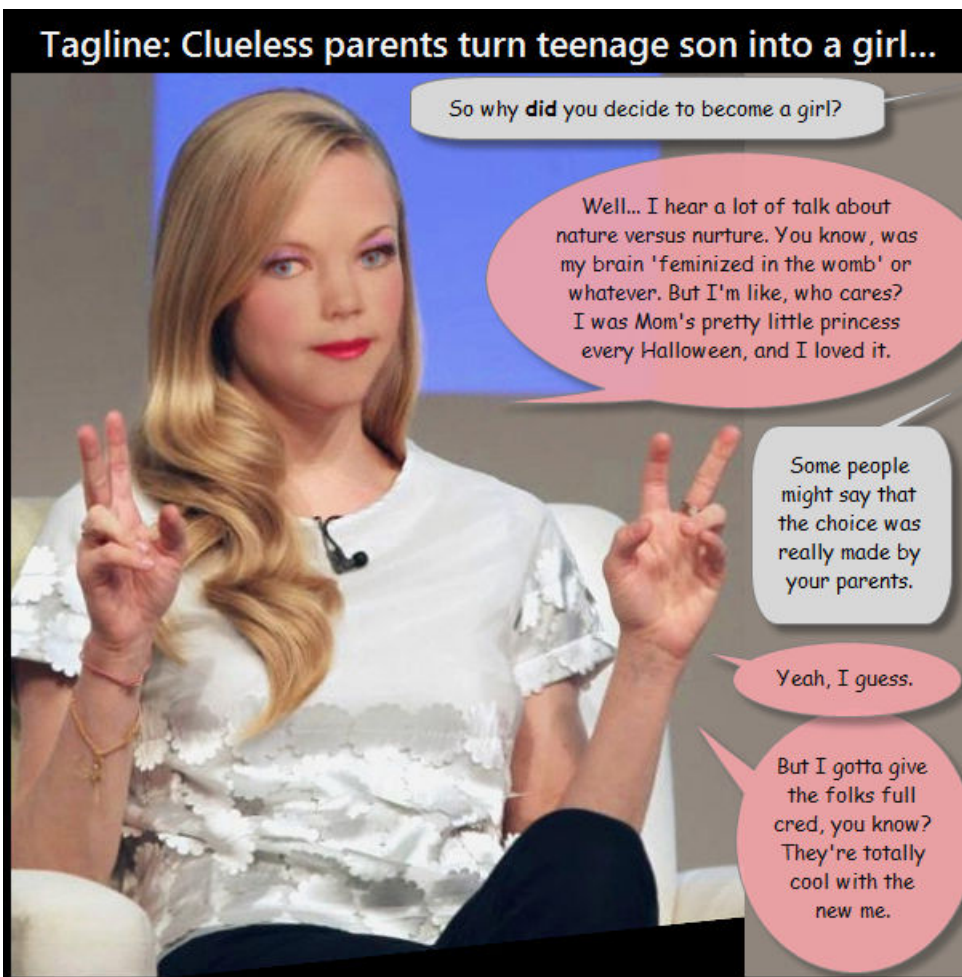
“Why not? He could’ve gone as *Joe* Montana instead of some bimbo.”

“Henry! My daughter is certainly *not* a bimbo. She’s really a very sweet girl. You should see how she helps around the house. But you can’t, can you? Because you’re never there!”

“It’s called earning a living, Helen.”

“Well, I think you like it. Being on the road all the time, hanging out with your buddies. I practically raised her myself. Maybe if you’d been around more often your son wouldn’t be out there on national TV, wearing makeup and a pink blouse!”

“You’re pinning this on me? That’s rich. Who was it that dolled him up for this pageant thing? Pierced ears? Hair extensions? A professional makeover? Christ, what did you *think* would happen?”



“How was I to know the salon would do such a good job? It’s not like I said, ‘Turn him into a really cute girl so he won’t want to change back.’”

“That’s what they do, isn’t it? And it was *you* that super-glued boobs on the poor kid!”

“I didn’t know we’d need solvent... Listen, Henry, your son wanted to *win*. Who taught him that?”

“But he didn’t win, did he? How could he? A bunch of guys in drag—and the poor kid gets disqualified because everyone assumes he’s a real girl.”

“Well... maybe he is.”

“Sure, *now*. And for the record, I taught him to compete in sports, not in some damn bikini contest.”

“Womanless beauty pageant.”

“Whatever. And by the time the solvent arrives he’s had that rack for two solid weeks—and then it’s too late. Now he’s got his own damn tits.”

“They’re called breasts.”

“Whatever... How am I ever gonna show my face at work after this?”

“Is that all you care about? Look at her, Henry. She’s your daughter.”

“No, she’s *your* daughter.”

“My, she certainly is well-spoken, isn’t she? And she’s so pretty. I think the stylist did a wonderful job on her hair.”

“Yeah, I’m thrilled about that. Say, they didn’t mention her name on the air, did they? Or ours, for that matter?”

“Only her first name. Why?”

“Because no one has to know it’s us! We can just tell people she’s our niece.”

“You’d disown your own daughter? Just to hide the fact that you messed up being a father so badly that you turned

your son into a girl? Oh, that’s classy.”

“Give me a break, Helen—”

“No, Henry. Give *her* a break. She made a really tough choice, changing her life like that, and now she’s out there telling the whole world. I’m proud of my little princess. You should be too...

“Oh, look! They’re showing that picture they took before the show—all three of us together.”

“Crap!” ■