

MY JOY AFTER A LIFE OF TORMENT

BOB was never very happy at being a man. For years he wrestled with a desperate identity crisis which almost cost him his life.

He took a drugs overdose because he could not cope with his own feelings — and was bitterly disappointed when the suicide bid failed.

Bob knew deep down that he was a woman in a man's body, but he fought his emotions.

However, 18 months after his marriage went sour, he decided to give in and have a sex change.

Mixed-up Bob became Jeanette who dressed and lived as a woman 24 hours a day.

That decision was the hardest SHE had ever made — and she has never been happier.

Now, all Jeanette wants to do is forget her life as Bob and settle down to the monotony of a normal life in her home on a Wellingborough housing estate.

And she is keen to give advice to others who may be enduring the torture which plagued her for years.

Excited

Jeanette (31) is taking hormone tablets to develop her bust and is looking forward excitedly to the operation which will complete her sex change.

"My seven months in Wellingborough have been the happiest of my life."

She has vivid memories of her difficult childhood when she didn't know who she really was.

"Even at junior school I hated sports days. They just didn't appeal to me."

"When I was very young I was always quite happy to play with girls. I remember crying my eyes out because I wanted a pram."

"My mother told me not to be stupid but eventually I did get one."

happened because my father worked shifts and I spent so much time with my mother. She was always the one who gave me pocket money.

"I used to see girls and my mates would say they were attractive, but I felt envious because of the pretty clothes they wore. I don't know whether I thought I was homosexual or not."

"By the time I got to secondary school I was still ignorant about sex and even though I read books I was still muddled and confused."

"I found myself being attracted to dress shops and, at 15 or 16, I would wander past a dozen times before plucking up enough courage to go in and buy

By Charles Graves

As time went on Jeanette says her feminine instincts grew stronger but she felt increasingly alone and depressed because there was no one she could turn to for help and advice.

Her parents dismissed their son's dressing up as "one of those phases children go through".

Jeanette felt this might be the case so she got rid of her women's clothing and went to sea as a steward to sort herself out.

But that did not work. She came back, rented a flat by herself, and realised she still wanted to wear women's clothing.

It was then that she took the overdose — but she was discovered in time.

"I was very sad that I failed," she recalls.

It was around this time, at 19, that Jeanette finally admitted to herself that she wanted to be a full-time woman — instead of just dressing up occasionally.

But it would still be a long time before this happened, about 10 years.

In love

Back at sea, and in her early twenties, Jeanette fell in love with a girl she met in the Seychelles.

They lived together for a while after Jeanette confessed her fetish. She thought it might destroy their relationship but the girl accepted the situation.

Eventually, they decided to get married, a move Jeanette now admits was a dreadful mistake.

"There were always nagging doubts but I did not want to lose her."

"She was hoping marriage would alter my outlook and I would revert to things got drastically worse. We used to argue about it."

"I never see her now but I feel sorry for her. I have messed her life up."

After returning from a trip to sea she discovered her wife had left. In a way Jeanette was relieved. That was about two years ago.

She was so fed up she decided finally to do what she wanted — and live as a woman all the time.

"I thought 'Why should I bother about what other people say or think?'"

"It's my life and I'll do what I want."

Jeanette admits the first time she went out in daylight dressed as a woman she was terrified.

"At first I used to stand on the step for ages not knowing whether to go out

"But after the first time it got easier and easier."

"I thought people were looking at me all the time but they weren't. I felt so happy."

Operation

The next stage was to make inquiries about a sex change operation.

She arranged a visit to a doctor in London and admits the first meeting reduced her to tears.

"He was very abrupt and I hated him. Everything I had expected, like sympathy, I didn't get."

"I came out and cried my eyes out. I was really upset."

"But I suppose he had to be sure people are serious."

The date of the sex change operation has still to be fixed, but Jeanette is keen to undergo it as soon as possible.

That could be within a year on the national health.

After that Jeanette wants to become involved in a serious relationship with a man.

Even now she feels she could sustain a close liaison with a man — if he accepted her as a woman.

"I believe there can be deep feelings without sex," she said.

Now that she has overcome the worst of her troubled emotional life, Jeanette is concerned others may be suffering the torment she endured for so long.

"I would willingly give them advice but they have to help themselves by doing what they want to do."

If they have only half the courage and determination Jeanette has, they will not go far wrong.

'Give us a fair deal'



A PLEA for a better deal from society for sex change people was made today by Wellingborough transsexual Jeanette.

Jeanette, who declined to reveal her surname, urged employers to be more tolerant of those in her position.

And she called on the Government to set up special clinics to offer help and advice.

She is also prepared to speak to people in the area who have identity problems and feel they might want to change sex.

Jeanette, a stewardess with a major oil company, was born Bob Nayler but changed the name by deed poll about 18 months ago.

Since that time she has lived and dressed as a woman and is now undergoing a course of treatment including hormone tablets to develop breasts.

And she is hoping to have an operation to complete the sex change in the next year or two.

Jeanette, who also wants to keep her address secret as protection from cranks, said: "Everybody is different and I think people have the right to live as they wish."

"I want to be treated as a normal person but there are still prejudices."

"Some people are very ignorant of what is going on around them."

"I only wish they would learn about the subject before they laugh, mock and sneer at us."

Ideally, she would like to get a job locally in the catering trade because she is fed-up of having to spend so much time away from her home.

"But I think firms would be very dubious about employing me," she said.

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