

APRIL ASHLEY'S

OWN STORY

Why nature goes wrong

— by a medical research doctor currently investigating the effects of sex drugs.

THE NEXT MAN I MARRY

I REFUSE to be condemned to a life of loneliness.

I know what it means to be really utterly lonely and I am not going to accept loneliness as my future because of a clash between nature and the law. Nature I am certain, always intended that I should be a woman. But at the end of my divorce case a few days ago the judge ruled that legally I am a man. I am going to appeal against the judge's decision because it takes away from me all the simple important things I want so much—a husband, an adopted family, happiness. It means that the law of Britain forbids me ever to share my life with anyone, forbids me to love or be loved, puts me apart from all the ordinary men and women in the human race.

Love

In my teens I knew the loneliness of that kind of life. Mentally I was female and my body had feminine shape. Yet one part of me was definitely male. I was capable of loving as a woman loves. But I was not capable of making love as a woman makes love. I had breasts and hips which came naturally and, whatever I wore, I looked so female that I could not even use the gentlemen's loo. Yet technically I was male, so I could not live properly as a girl. I was not capable of a love match with either men or women because of my opposing mental and physical characteristics and I was forced to be

considerable mental and physical suffering to become fully female and I am not going to let anything stop me now.

I intend to marry and adopt children and live in the country.

I know I will be a good wife because I am very understanding where men are concerned and I am a good housewife.

I do not sew very well but I am a super cook, especially with Spanish fish dishes.

I used to give dinner parties for up to fourteen people and I did all the cooking and supervised everything.

My future husband is going to have to be a very special kind of man because of the problems he will have to face by marrying me.

I do not have any special type and all the men I have had affairs with have been vastly different. But for me a man must be gentle and kind.

Any man who gets involved with me now, however, will have to be pretty tough because he obviously will have to put up with a lot of snide remarks.

On the whole people have been incredibly kind and, since my divorce case and the publicity, I have frequently been stopped in the street by people who want to write me well, and I have had a lot of lovely letters.

neither male nor female society.

My in-between life made me a target for the misfits on both sides, so I was pursued by male and female homosexuals.

That belongs in my past and I am determined it will not be my future as well.

My operation in Casablanca ten years ago removed my male identification and completed me as a woman.

The surgeon may have created something artificial, but it was made so that it could function properly, which it does with complete satisfaction.

Future

So to me, and to all my friends, I am a woman and I cannot be anything else, despite the ruling of the judge that I am a man and cannot be married as a woman.

Well, I do intend to marry again.

That is the future I want for myself and I am not going to let the judgment spoil my life.

If I do not win the appeal which I am considering, then I will have to go abroad to France or one of the other countries where I hope I would be fully recognised as female.

I would hate to do it because I love England.

But I would have no choice because I could not go through life living as one thing and being called something else.

I have gone through

April Ashley's exclusive story edited by **RONALD MAXWELL**

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prove how ridiculous the legal position is.

I mean, supposing I deliberately committed a crime so that I would be sent to prison, would it be a prison for men or a prison for women?

If the law regards me as a man then it would have to be a man's prison.

But I cannot imagine any human being putting me into a place where I would share a cell with several men.

Accepted

Some countries accept me completely as a woman and in those countries I could marry a man, with no problems.

In Britain, it seems, I could only marry a woman.

Supposing I did both, would I be guilty of bigamy?

I would not have two husbands or two wives so what would happen?

In practice, of course I do not intend to do anything to defy the law because I want to have the law on my side, accepting me fully as a woman, so I intend acting always in the proper legal manner.

My appeal is unlikely to be heard for a year or more and meanwhile, I must earn money.

So later this month I am launching a new career.

I will be running a new restaurant with an old friend called

Desmond Morgan who is a chef.

It is being called AD 8 — A for April, D for Desmond and the 8 comes from the number in Egerton Gardens Mews, Chelsea.

That should be great fun.

It will seat about a hundred and there is a fantastic, beautiful brass bar big enough for about thirty people.

I feel it will be rather like giving a large cocktail party every evening and I am really looking forward to it.

I do not mind being in the public eye by running a restaurant or by appearing on television, because my biggest ambition is to prove to the world that I am feminine and a woman.

Cause

People who meet me and see me and talk to me accept me without question.

So I think that for the moment my cause is helped by being seen.

Once I was in a club with Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif and there were two friends standing nearby who started to fight.

I managed to stop the fight and Omar Sharif said to me: "April, you are not only a woman but you are a very great lady."

That is what I want to be.



For April Ashley—a life without loneliness. Picture by DAVID JOHNSON

ONLY recently has medical science begun to find out how and why the body changes. How boys become men. Why girls become women.

We have known for some time that each sex produces both male and female hormones.

Normal men produce more male hormones (androgens) and normal women a predominance of female hormones (oestrogens).

For each of us there is a personal balance of nature; a set of sexual scales on which one side is loaded more heavily than the other. But there are people for whom this delicate balance does not work properly. These unfortunates are neither fully male nor fully female.

In the female, oestrogens are responsible for the change from girlhood to womanhood—the growth of breasts, the onset of menstruation, the fuller, rounded figure. But they can also work on men.

Indeed, young male rats which have been given large doses of them have grown up to act as females.

What was not known until recently was that these hormones attach themselves to parts of the brain, which sub-

sequently affects sexual behaviour. Normally, if the body—male or female—produces too many hormones, nature has a safety valve.

The brain sends a message to the pituitary gland, which acts as its "middle man" and tells the hormone "factories" (the testicles in the male, the ovaries in the female or perhaps, the adrenal glands) to stop making so many.

What we do not know is what happens if the brain does not work properly and its message gets garbled.

Or if the "middle man" makes a mistake. Or if the glands themselves are faulty.

It is possible, if any one of these happens, that the body could go on producing too many wrong-sex hormones.

It is also possible that a "man" with full male body, could think and act like a woman, and want to be a woman.

If we add to this problem all the various psychological aspects—the influence of a dominant mother or the absence of a father, lack of contact with girls during childhood, rejection by society—we have indeed a major catastrophe of nature.