



## **PUBLIC SCHOOL BY MARYANNE PETERS**

WORTHING SCHOOL MAY NOT BE AS WELL-KNOWN AS OTHER "PUBLIC" SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND, OR ONE OF THE OLDEST, BUT IT WAS A PROUD INSTITUTION MODELLED ON THE CLASSIC PRIVATE BOARDING SCHOOLS OF THE NATION SCHOOLS LIKE ETON, HARROW, RUGBY, WINCHESTER AND CHARTERHOUSE.

SO OLD IN FACT, THAT MY GREAT GRANDFATHER HAD GONE THERE, AND HE SET UP A SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIS SON, MY GRANDFATHER THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLIDE OF MY FAMILY TO THE BOTTOM RING OF THE LADDER. THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND HAD BEEN REALISED AND WORTHING SCHOOL OFFERED THE SCHOLARSHIP TO ME.

I WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER AT WORTHING. I WAS SMART ENOUGH, BUT I WAS NOT BIG ENOUGH FOR RUGBY, OR WELL CONNECTED. THOSE ARE THE THINGS THAT COUNTED AT WORTHING.

I PREFERRED THE ARTS. AT WORTHING THAT MEANT PLAY-ACTING. SOME WOULD CALL IT DRAMA, BUT FOR MOST AT WORTHING IT WAS PLAY ACTING. I SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY ONE PLAYING IT STRAIGHT, AND OF COURSE I WAS THE ONE TO PLAY THE FEMALE ROLES. ALL OF THEM, IF I COULD.

IT WAS A BIT OF A STANDING JOKE AT WORTHING. I EVEN PICKED UP THE NICKNAME "JENNY" WHICH WAS BASICALLY JUST A SHORTENING OF MY SURNAME AND IS CERTAINLY BETTER THAN "BUTTERCUP" WHICH I HAD STARTED WITH.

IT WAS RECOGNISED THAT I HAD THE LONGEST HAIR AT WORTHING. I HAD SPECIAL DISPENSATION FOR "COSTUME REASONS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL PRODUCTIONS". I WOULD PROUDLY FLICK IT AROUND, BUT FOR ASSEMBLY I WOULD KEEP IT SLICKED BACK.

AS A JOKE SOME FELLOWS SENT ME A BOX OF HEATED CURLERS. I KEPT THEM. I USED THEM AS PART OF MY COSTUME IN A PLAY CALLED "THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT FLORENCE" WHERE 5 BOYS PLAYING IT FOR LAUGHS, SOUGHT THE FAVOURS OF FLORENCE, PLAYED BY ME. I HAD LEARNED HOW TO USE THE CURLERS THROUGH APPROVED ACCESS TO THE INTERNET, AND I HAD ADDED A LITTLE COLOUR.

I HAD NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT DRESSING AS A GIRL BEFORE I GOT INVOLVED I DRAMA AT WORTHING, BUT FOR SOME REASON WHEN I PULLED ON A DRESS, SOMETHING JUST CLICKED. IT SEEMED AS IF BELONGED IN CLOTHES JUST LIKE THAT.





GEORGE WAS HEAD PREFECT AND GENERALLY THE BIG DOG IN SCHOOL. I HAD TRIED HARD TO IMPRESS HIM THAT I WAS A COMMITTED "WORTHING BOY", BUT HE NEVER SEEMED TO NOTICE. IT WAS ONLY WHEN I STARTED TO TREAD THE BOARDS AS FLORENCE THAT I PRICKED HIS ATTENTION, OR MAYBE EVEN MADE HIS PRICK COME TO ATTENTION.

"I SAY, JENNY, YOU MAKE A DAMN GOOD FLORENCE. YOU SEEM TO BE GETTING ALL THE CHAPS WORKED UP."

DAMN RIGHT.

WE WERE BOTH HETEROSEXUAL GUYS AT THE TIME, BUT WE FELL IN LOVE. HE IS STILL A HETEROSEXUAL GUY. I THINK THAT HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE. WHEN HE FELL IN LOVE WITH ME, I WAS NOT A GUY, YOU SEE?

I ONLY KNEW IT WHEN HE TOLD ME HOW HE FELT. I TOLD HIM THAT I KNEW THAT THE WAY HE FELT WAS RIGHT, BECAUSE I KNEW IT WAS. HE WAS NOT GAY, BECAUSE I WAS NOT TRULY MALE. I DID NOT KNOW THAT WHEN I PUT THE DRESS ON AND FELT RIGHT, BUT I KNEW IT WHEN I LOOKED IN HIS EYES AND WE SHARED A FEELING THAT ONLY A MAN AND A WOMAN CAN SHARE.

BUT WE WERE THERE AT WORTHING, WHERE IT IS NOT THE DONE THING. HE HAD THE HEARTBREAK OF WATCHING HIS GIRL APPEAR EVERY SCHOOL DAY IN MAN-DRAG. I HAD THE HEARTBREAK OF WATCHING MY GUY HEARTBROKEN UNTIL I COULD DRESS FOR HIM IN THOSE PRIVATE MOMENTS, AND HE COULD SEE THE REAL ME.

I STARTED TAKING PILLS EVEN IN SCHOOL, SHARING THE SMALL CHANGES IN MY BODY WITH MY BOYFRIEND, TO HIS DELIGHT (AND MINE).

I LEFT WORTHING AS SOON AS I COULD. OF COURSE, I SAID YES WHEN MY GEORGIE ASKED. I WANTED TO SLOUGH OFF THIS MALE HUSK TO REVEAL THE REAL ME PERMANENTLY. I WANTED TO BE HIS WIFE. THAT WAS MY DESTINY IN LIFE.

WE WENT TO SEE MY PARENTS. I GUESS THEY WERE A BIT HORRIFIED BY THE CHANGES THEY SAW IN THEIR SON, BUT GEORGE WON THEM OVER. HE IS OF SUBSTANCE, YOU SEE. MY PARENTS ARE NOT. HE PROMISED THEM THAT HE WOULD MAKE ME THE HAPPIEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

HE HAS ALWAYS MADE ME HAPPY HE JUST NEEDED TO MAKE ME A WOMAN.

THE END

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