

From Punk to Pop - Part 1

By TheSpiralledEye

Everything was going right for Hobbie; his rock band was finally about to record their album and hit the big time, fame and fortune within their grasp. But Hobbie also has a secret, he has a genetic condition which will cause him to transform into a woman without the proper medication. When the medication stops working he has no choice but to reinvent himself as the bands new lead singer and hope his dreams of stardom can still become reality.

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Hobbie leaned against the mic, wiping his sweat soaked fringe away from his eyes as he stared out into the crowded bar. The applause had been deafening, well, as deafening as applause could be with a room that at best had fifty people in it. Across the stage Johnny grinned at him and Hobbie felt his face mirror the expression.

“Thanks folks, that’s all from us tonight! If you wanna see us again though, shout out, make the old coot behind the bar hire us again!”

There was a cheer from the crowd and Hobbie and his crew stepped away from the stage into the tiny room that the owner had charitably called ‘backstage’. Really, it was an old bathroom that had all the plumbing removed but still, it provided a small modicum of privacy for the crew to come down from the high of performing.

“That seemed pretty good!” Sid announced as he slung his bass off his shoulder, “Think anybody big was listening?”

“In a dump like this? Unlikely.” Cass rolled her eyes, “I thought you said we’d be done playing mom and pop joints by now, Hobbie.”

“Every big star has to start somewhere, just you wait,” Hobbie grinned, grabbing one of the free beers he'd managed to haggle for as part of their fee, “Solid Mercury will be a household name soon enough.”

Cass rolled her eyes but smiled. Hobbie knew she meant well, she loved putting on a big show about how she thought shooting for the stars was a stupid idea but if she didn't believe in the band she'd have jumped ship by now. Deep down, even Hobbie had his doubts but he pushed them aside. Between the five of them, they had the best sound in London, he was sure of it.

"Don't be such a downer, Cass." Johnny threw his arm around Hobbie, "Us two have been playn' guitar since we could walk! There ain't nobody better in the world and with Hobbie's songs we're guaranteed to hit the big time any day now!"

Hobbie blushed; Johnny was his oldest and best friend. This whole band had started between them back in highschool smoking behind the toilet block while skipping class. Slowly, over the next few years they'd recruited their other friends and one weed filled night two years ago the name Solid Mercury was coined and they had all decided to actually go for it. Loads of people talked about starting a band but barely any of them ever did it.

"I want to be that 1%, the one 1% that actually achieves greatness." Johnny had sighed, taking a drag of his cigarette, "We can do it, y'know? I really think we can."

It was good having Johnny's near endless bravado and optimism to balance out Cass. The final two members of their group, siblings Iggy and Sid, were in charge of keys and bass respectively. Looking at the two you'd never guess they were siblings, let alone twins. Sid was huge, dumb and constantly had a goofy smile on his face. While Iggy wore their hair over their face and rarely said anything at all. None of them, save Sid, even knew if they were a boy or a girl. When they initially asked, Sid had answered for them and said it didn't matter and that was that.

"There was somebody in the back wearing a suit." Iggy said quietly, somehow, no matter how loud the rest of them were they managed to make themselves heard with a whisper.

"Probably another faker," Cass shrugged, "Don't get your hopes up."

"Nah this is it, I can feel it!" Sid grinned.

“Like you’ve felt it every other time somebody vaguely professional looking watches our shows?” Cass teased, Sid stuck his tongue out at her and Hobbie snorted, coughing as his beer stung the inside of his nose.

He couldn’t help it, there was something inherently comical about a dude as bulky as Sid poking out his tongue like a little kid. Quietly, Johnny nudged him.

“Pill?” He whispered seriously.

“Took it before the show.” Hobbie assured him.

None of the others knew about his meds, even Johnny didn’t know what they were for. Maybe that’s why he’d always felt comfortable telling him. Johnny never asked why Hobbie needed to take a little blue pill every day, only that it was important. Hobbie could always see the curiosity burning behind his eyes but he didn’t ask. Just another reason the man was his best friend.

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Hobbie has been sixteen when his parents sat him down and explained that he had something called the Shepsut gene. A condition his mother also shared and had always suspected had passed down to her son. At first he’d been terrified, the words 'incurable mutagenic condition were hardly going to make him feel calm. Then they had told him it wasn’t deadly or even debilitating.

It would make him a woman.

Being a dramatic sixteen year old, he’d claimed that was just as bad. Finding out his mother had been born a man was just an extra curve ball to the head. He’d been about ready to have an existential crisis until his mother had gently explained the pills to him. One little blue pill every day and he would stay his usual self.

Genetic stabilisation; something that had only recently been invented. Unlike his mother, he had a choice to remain a man which of course he’d taken. His mother had long since accepted her female life and had no desire to change but she was glad her son actually had the choice.

Over the years he'd researched the condition, it was so rare most people didn't even know it existed, a few scientific journals claimed it may have very well been a myth. The fact that the genetic stabilisers had been invented at all was a miracle.

Hobbie groaned as he rolled over in bed; the sun was streaming through his window so intensely he knew it must have only just risen. Yet it wasn't the light that had woken him, it was the insistent ringing of his phone; who called somebody at 6:43am? The number was unknown, which made him even more annoyed, it was probably a spam call. Out of inertia more than anything he answered.

"Hello?"

"Ah, is this James Hobb?"

"Hobbie." He muttered, "Yeah."

"My anime is Francis Francis, of Crystal Records, I believe you may have heard of us."

Hobbit was wide awake in an instant; Francis Francis was famous for two things, having a stupid name and being the name behind some of the country's biggest bands. Crystal Records produced four out of the five most popular bands right now, not to mention their independent singers. This was the sort of call he'd been waiting for his entire life.

"Yes, I've heard of you." He swallowed, trying not to sound too excited, "Did you see our show the other night?"

"Yes! In fact, I've seen three."

Francis Francis had seen *three* of their shows and he'd not noticed?!

"I like your style, bit of grunge, bit of punk. Got that real classic underground band feel ya get me."

“Oh yes, that’s what we’re going for. We want to go back to the old days when music was classic!”

“Brilliant! That’s just what I am after, don’t get me wrong, you all need some polish but that’s nothing a professional studio can’t offer you.”

Hobbie’s heart felt like it was about to beat out of his chest; his whole chest was practically starting to ache.

“Tell you what, I’ll give you all a chance to record a demo down at my London studio.”

“On Fleetwood street?” Hobbie gasped, that studio was legendary, it was where all the greats recorded, it was said to be lucky. If you recorded there, you were guaranteed success.

“That’s the one.” Francis Francis replied, Hobbie could practically hear the smug smile on his face. “Now, nothing is set in stone, I want to hear how you sound in a professional setting, your drummer needs to lay off the cymbals a bit and your vocals could use some fine tuning, but I am sure you can work on that before next week?”

“Absolutely!”

Francis Francis exchanged more information and emailed through the documentation to get them all into the studio, along with a preliminary contract for them all to look over; provided the recording was liked by members of the board. Hobbie knew it would be. This was it, they were finally getting their big break!

He immediately called the rest of the group who went through a similar experience to him; irritation at being woken up before genuine elation.

“I told you!” Johnny cried, “Didn’t I tell you, man?”

“Yeah.”

“We’re gonna practise till our fingers bleed, ain’t we?”

“You bet we are.”

Johnny laughed and they hung up, Hobbie grinned ear to ear and ran for the cupboard; he needed to get dressed, no time for a shower. He had to practise! His chest was still aching as he shoved on his jeans and shirt and by the time he'd reached the garage it was almost hurting. It felt like the skin was stretching or warping; the muscles aching terribly.

For a moment a bolt of fear moved through him; was this a heart attack? If he was one of those weird cases of a random heart attack in his twenties he would riot. He was not about to die right before everything was going right. But no numbness came to his arm and there was no smell of burning toast. Just that ache. But it was spreading; he could feel it on his hips now, in fact, he was sure his waistband felt tighter in a distinctly *wrong* way.

He lifted the hem of his shirt and looked down at his body; Hobbie had always been a bit reedy but now his straight body had a distinct curve to it that hadn't been there before; it was subtle but Hobbie could tell his hips seemed wider and his eyes moved to match.

“Crap!”

He rushed back toward the apartment feeling a distinctly new kind of panic washing over him. His trembling fingers closed around his pills and swallowed one dry with a sigh of relief. He'd never had that happen before; even when he'd been late taking a pill.

Hobbie's brow furrowed; he wasn't late taking it either, in fact, he was early. And he'd not forgotten to take it the day before. A strange dread settled in his stomach, dread he ignored; he wasn't about to let his condition ruin the best day of his life. Well, best so far, soon to be overtaken by the day they signed a contract with Francis Francis, and if they were going to do that, he needed to get to practice.

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Sweat dripped from his brow; created from effort yes, but also nerves. The band had been practising nonstop for hours, practically all day every day for the past few. And it wasn't going well. Everybody else was in the groove but Hobbie seemed to be going through some strange new puberty, his voice kept cracking when he tried to sing, his register going up a whole octave somehow.

“Alright guys, I think that's enough for today.” He cleared his throat, having to make a conscious effort to make his voice sound normal.

Iggy and Sid exchanged glances; if Sid could tell something was up Hobbie knew he was in trouble.

“Maybe you could sing better if ya took off that scarf. Ain'tcha hot, man?” Sid asked, Hobbie shook his head despite that being a bold faced lie.

He'd been taking his pills on time, but they didn't seem to be working. When he'd woken up this morning with his Adam's Apple missing he'd almost cried. Baggy clothing could hide his budgeting curves, but his voice took constant effort to maintain and singing was practically impossible with his natural register now at a whole other level.

Despite taking his medication on time every day Hobbie could feel that his body was changing. The subtle cinching of his waist was getting a lot less subtle each day and his chest had started to cause swelling. His hair had also started to grow increasingly fast, he'd been forced to take a pair of scissors to it this morning which had resulted in a patchy, not particularly even hairdo. He was hoping enough gel could make it look deliberate. Judging from the looks the others gave him though, that was unlikely.

At the end of practice Cass, Iggy and Sid all filed out of the garage with worried looks on their faces. Hobbie could tell what they were thinking; if he didn't get his act together within the next few days, he was going to blow their big break. Johnny hung back and turned to face him seriously as soon as the door closed.

“What's going on with you?” He asked, “Something is up, you're majorly off your game and if what you said about Francis Francis was true, we can't have that now, mate.”

“I know.” Hobbie groaned, flopping down on the couch dramatically.

“So what's going on, man?” Johnny asked, “You know you can be straight with me.”

Hobbie bit his lip; he'd been friends with Johnny his entire life, maybe it was time he knew anyway.

“My meds stopped working.” He sighed and Johnny's dark skin paled somewhat.

“I'm not dying!” Hobbie added hastily, “I have this genetic thing, Shepsut Syndrome. It's mega rare.”

“So what does it do?”

“When somebody who has it goes through puberty their chromosomes...reverse. So a girl born with it becomes a guy and a guy...”

“Becomes a girl.” Johnny said with disbelief in his voice.

“I’m a dude, so I use medication to keep the change at bay but it stopped working a few days ago and now I’m starting to...well...you know.”

“Turn into a chick?”

“Yeah.”

There was silence for a minute, Johnny looked...angry.

“You know, I’ve always been a good mate to you, Hobbie.” He said after a moment, “if you didn't want to tell me the truth that’s whatever but you don’t have to lie-”

“I’m not lying!” Hobbie cried, feeling frustrated tears prick at the back of his eyes. “Look it up! Hell, just look at me!”

He ripped the scarf away from his neck and removed his shirt so that he was left only in his baggy jeans. He watched as Johnny’s eyes widened; taking in the subtly feminine shape his body had started to take on, the developing breasts, the lack of bulge in his throat. The proof was right in front of him.

“Holy shit.”

Hobbie blushed with embarrassment, putting his shirt back on without meeting Johnny’s eye.

“I’m...sorry, man. For not believing you.”

“That’s okay, I don’t blame you.”

They sat in silence for a minute.

“Do you have like, a doctor or something?”

“Yeah, I'm going to see him tomorrow.”

“Well then, that's that. No point stressing about it when there is nothing you can do.” Johnny slapped him on the back, “I'm sure there is a simple fix, a different dosage or something and then everything will be just the way it was and the band will take off.”

Hobbie smiled, he almost believed him.

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“I'm afraid there is nothing we can do.”

Those words had been echoing through his head for the last few hours. His doctor had examined him before somberly saying those few words.

“Prolonged use of the medication seems to have helped your body develop a tolerance. And the newest drugs are still in development. I am afraid that until they are deemed fit for usage, there isn't anything we can do to keep you male.”

Everything had happened quite quickly after that. He'd been admitted to the local hospital for observation, to ensure his body changed safely without any major organs getting messed up in the process and a counsellor was assigned to him. A female one, one who had talked him through all the practical knowledge he'd know to properly take care of his feminine body.

They'd provided him with bras, underwear, even a few outfits ranging from jeans and shirts to frilly dresses to 'help him get comfortable with his new body'. He had less than twenty four hours before he was fully changed; at least that's what they suspected. He'd text Johnny, told him not to tell the others he needed to break this to them himself. He just...didn't have the heart to do it yet.

He slept fitfully, tossing from side to side as his body stretched and ached throughout the night. He kept the room pitch black, he didn't want to see his body in some freakish in-between but as the sunlight filtered through the hospital room curtains he knew he couldn't avoid it any longer. His body already felt different; most notably, he could feel a distinct absence between his legs.

He took a deep breath and turned on the light, making his way to the bathroom where the doctors had thoughtfully provided him with a full length mirror to examine himself in. He was thin still, willowy with small but distinct curves. He couldn't help but smile at that;

part of him had been afraid he'd wake up as some busty, curvy model type. Instead he looked much more natural, with perky but reasonably sized breasts and a nice pair of hips that didn't border on ridiculous.

His hair was long, but sort of spunky, random strands seemed to float above the others and his bright blue eyes had taken on an almost unnatural brightness. He was a conventional beauty by any measure but what he was, was distinctive. Pretty in his own way; more importantly, he could still see himself in this woman staring back at him. Her lips quirked into a smile the same way his did, her eyebrow still had a tiny nick missing from when he accidentally walked into a pole while drunk a few years ago.

He could live with this; or at least he could have were it not for the fact this change had come at the worst possible time. He threw on the clothes provided and video called Johnny who picked up after only a single ring; he was wide awake and had probably been waiting.

"Well, what do you think?" Hobbie asked, still getting used to his new voice; it was husky and deep, but still obviously feminine.

"Honestly, mate? You look great and still like you!" Johnny grinned, "Those clothes though, they ain't doing you any favours."

"Well excuse me for not having a better wardrobe picked out."

The two of them laughed and Hobbie felt his tension start to melt away, this felt normal, this was right.

"How are your pipes?" Johnny asked and Hobbie shrugged. "Come on then, give them a whirl!"

He took a deep breath and started to sing one of their best numbers, Soul Storm, to his surprise he sounded...good. Actually, he sounded great! Different to what he was used to but his new voice added a soulful, rawness to the song that it had never had before. He only intended to sing a few lines but he felt himself go into the zone and before he knew it, he was belting out the full thing, ending on a long, high note he'd never have hit as a man that added a whole other dimension to the song.

"Woah." Johnny breathed, "That was incredible! That's the best you've ever sounded!"

“Really?” Hobbie blushed.

“Really. Hey, I have an idea, what size are you now?”

“Isn’t that a rude thing to ask a lady?” Hobbie grinned.

“Shut up and give me the sizes, I’m going to get you some proper clothes and then we’re going to practise. Solid Mercury has a brand new lead singer and she’ll need to look the part.”