CW: Physical child abuse. Not graphic but definitely scary.

When I woke up, I was a little kid again. I was in a bedroom I remembered from my childhood, my brother was sleeping in the bunk above, and I was in a body that wasn't even close to fitting me.

I screamed. I screamed and I cried and I sobbed, and family members came to see what was wrong, and in the middle of it my brother nearly fell off the top bunk.

The memories I had. The years of memories. The years of pain and suffering that I went through at the hands of my family, just for trying to be myself... the torment I went through, and I put them through, only to result in me transitioning as an adult and them getting over it in the end.

But I never had. I had always remained jaded, in part... how do you not, when your body is so distorted? When that distortion had been directly caused by that family?

And that's why, when I stopped crying long enough to speak, the very first thing I said to my family — my mother crying too, trying desperately to figure out what's so wrong; my father standing back, looking at me closely in an effort to do the same; my brother staring at me, wide-eyed — was, "I'm a girl."

Before it had happened, I was in my twenties. I'd already begun to leave my prime, and never once in that time had I truly felt like myself.

In other words, I'd lost my prime to them. To parents that didn't understand. To parents that *refused* to understand. They understood only after years to... 'acclimate,' years to see just how much happier I was with different hormones. By that point, of course, it was far too late.

I didn't know why I had gone all the way back to when I was eight years old. Maybe it was because that was when I had figured out I was supposed to be a girl. Maybe not.

Either way, I was eight years old again, and this time I had the gift of foresight. I had years of arguing with my parents about my gender in my belt. I had the knowledge of how much better I felt with just hormones.

So you had better believe I started making changes immediately. I talked like a girl, I walked like a girl, I sat like a girl... Unfortunately, the number of things an eight year old can do to prove she's who she says she is are limited.

But they already knew how much I wanted feminine clothing, they knew how much I wanted to do my nails and toes and to grow my hair out again.

They didn't agree to it, of course — I was eight, this was probably a phase — but it was only the beginning. I'd work at them over time,

chipping away their resistance until they understand that that's just who I am.

Even if it takes my dad believing I'm a demon.

School was torture. For one thing, the information was mostly stuff I knew, so I was bored. For another, I was called a name I had already thrown off once. I didn't want to be called that name ever again.

So I refused to answer to it. When someone would talk to me using that name, or those pronouns, I'd just ignore them, pretending they were talking about someone else. When they finally gave up and like, came up to me or touched me — since most weren't respecting my name — I'd say the likes of, "Hmm? Were you talking to me? That's not my name, my name is..."

Eventually people began to cave in.

The people that *didn't* cave in were the ones that hurt me. The ones that made fun of me for being who I was.

It wasn't as if there was anything I could do about that, though. So I didn't. I was great at ignoring them. Nothing truly mattered besides transitioning early. This wasn't my body... not yet. It was only a matter of time until I was as pretty as any other girl and they'd change their minds.

I made a great many changes to my home life. One was my sleeping arrangements. From that first morning on, I had vehemently refused to sleep in the same room as my brother. Boys and girls have no business living out of the same room, especially if the girls and boys can be evenly separated. Since I had both a brother and a sister, it made much more sense to be in the same room as her. However, since my parents disagreed, I was sleeping on the couch until further notice.

Another change was that I was much, much more organised and studious than I had been my last time around. I knew very well that to get what I wanted I had to be perfect. So I was. I was everything they wanted. I barely used the computer, I focused on schoolwork, and spent the rest of my free time doing things with my mom and my baby sister.

I wondered how differently she'd turn out knowing that I was her sister from the beginning. I wanted to be the best big sister I possibly could be. The best daughter, too. I wouldn't settle for less.

I saw a psychologist *finally* a month after I had returned to the past. My parents tried to explain, and I wouldn't let them, instead choosing to explain myself. I told them about numerous little signs from before I was eight. I told them about how much it hurt to be in this body, to have

what I did when it so obviously didn't belong. I insisted that he call me by my real name, and I then redirected the discussion to the future I looked forward to.

"I just want to be a normal girl. When I'm grown up, I just want to be a normal woman."

To my surprise, it worked, and he recommended seeing an endocrinologist to figure out what to do with me.

My parents were not happy at that result.

I was overjoyed.

It had been a blessing that I had had relatively long hair at the time I had come back to. My childhood had been split into a series of growths followed by a buzz cut, and I guessed I had managed to come back at the perfect part of that cycle.

That being said, my hair did still need some work. I had been extremely pleased when I had asked my mom how to make my hair more feminine, and she'd offered to do it.

Was I finally wearing down on her? As I idly played with my new hairdo — I really hoped so. So, encouraged, I had again asked to do my nails and to wear feminine clothing. Unfortunately, like usual, I only got a glare.

It was okay. I'd win. It was only a matter of time.

My parents had been recommended to talk to an endocrinologist about my situation, given how sure I was about everything, and how learned on the matter I seemed to be. However, they wouldn't budge quite yet. I was maybe being a little *too* impatient, given that puberty hadn't started yet, but getting this all done and out of the way soon was important. I didn't want testosterone to mar any of my body. I wanted to be perfect.

After talking to them at least once a day about the appointment for a month, it was finally scheduled... for in four months. Hmm. Hopefully puberty hadn't started by then. Maybe I could get them to push it up further by continuing to beg.

I.

Got.

Feminine.

Clothes.

I had gone to the store with my mom, as per usual, and we had needed something in electronics. When we were done, we passed by the girl's section, and I looked pleadingly at my mom, just as I always did.

"Fine!" she'd exclaimed, probably a little too loud. "We can get you some clothes. Not much, though," she sighed. "What do you want?"

Practically jumping up and down, I had listed off my biggest desires. "Skinny jeans! A girly hoodie might be nice too, and I probably should have a few shirts, and, gosh, can I get a skirt or two? And a dress?"

My mom massaged her temples. "Let's start with the pants and shirts."

"Aww," I complained.

"If I promise to take you to a nicer store and get more later?"

I felt a huge grin appear between my cheeks, and had a feeling those muscles would be hurting later. "I can wait."

"Good... girl," she said.

Those two words were all it took to have a huge effect on me. I squealed and hugged her. "Mom... thank you, thank you."

I was like, *over* overjoyed after that, of course. *That* was progress. Like, yeah, I was finally able to get girls' clothes, but more importantly, my mom had finally caved and started calling me a girl. I was finally starting to get to her. It had been two months since I'd first woken up in the past, so maybe that made sense, though.

It was crazy, though, having a parent suddenly on my side. Having a parent suddenly start to respect my identity. Over the next few days I'd cried and hugged my mom, like, a *lot* more than I'd done previously, and I think that only cemented it even more for her.

My dad didn't like this stuff, though. He was still very much not a fan, still considering this to be something to fix. Often he'd question me about why I felt the way I did, and I'd explained it... the vague, jarring, dissociative feeling that is dysphoria, the feeling that many trans people can't even place for most of their early lives.

He didn't get it. Go figure.

Then, one day, something I'd gone through in my first childhood had been repeated, though with a slightly different cause.

He'd asked me, frustratedly, to not wear my new clothes to church, and I'd refused. Why would I not? They were cute. I felt cute wearing them. Especially if I put a bow in my hair.

It had become an argument, and I'd been misgendered by him multiple times, and I'd finally broken down into tears, said I hated him, probably

swearing in the process, and had run out of the room, up the stairs, and into my sister's room. (She was down with my mom, so the room was empty.) We'd been keeping my new girls' clothes in the closet here, though, so it felt like my room even if they wouldn't let me sleep in it yet.

I'd slammed the door behind me and tried to find something to bar the door with, but hadn't managed it in time... and then the door swung open, and fast.

My dad had chased me into the bedroom, and he was *not* happy. I backed up against my sister's crib, and he'd thrown me down onto it, banging my head in the process, and pinned me there. "I don't know how you got into my son, you *demon*, but I will get you out if it's the last thing I do!" he spat.

And then, angrily, he left the room, left me there to sob and nurse my aching head.

Turns out, some things never change.

I'd hid in the closet underneath my clothes for a while after that, just crying there. I hadn't thought it would happen again. I'd thought I was doing things right, that they were going to work... but still I'd gotten that kind of treatment.

And then, something changed. My mom came in the room, and she asked me what happened. So I told her. She'd been there for my argument with dad, but she hadn't been there for the chase. And once she saw the bruise on my head, her expression hardened.

She gave my dad shit for that. Like, a lot of shit. We'd missed church for their argument, but that wasn't all. They were also arguing late into that night. More than I'd ever seen them argue before. Never in my previous life had they argued like this, that I'd been privy to. Had I caused them to divorce, or something? Was that what was going to happen? But they were so happy in my other life... Why had things gone so wrong?

I fell asleep in a little pillow nest on the floor next to my sister's crib, that night.

The following morning, I didn't go downstairs. At some point, my sister had been taken down, but I didn't go with.

See, even though I knew my gender with a hundred percent certainty, I was worried I'd make things even worse by presenting that way. And I'd already gotten used to wearing girls' clothes again, so I didn't want to go back to boys' clothes either, so I just felt trapped there. Trapped and unable to do anything but cry.

It was my dad that came to grab me.

I was legitimately scared of him. I was an eight-year-old, for heaven's sake, not the fourteen-year-old I'd been the first time I'd lived through that. It was honestly lucky I hadn't gotten seriously hurt by his anger.

He was coming up to apologise, though, against all odds. And he started it by taking a deep breath, and then calling me by name.

Not deadname.

Name.

He called me by my name. And when that only made me cry worse, he asked what he could do, and I just thanked him that it was over. I mean, what else could would I want besides that torment to end? All I'd ever wanted was simple, I'd just wanted to be me. What everyone else took for granted. All I'd ever wanted was that, and he'd denied me that up until then.

But now it was over.

"I can be a girl, now?" I asked, wiping my eyes. "You'll let me be me?"

He opened his mouth, and closed it, then pursed his lips and nodded. "And your mom told me to apologise for not believing you."

I giggled through my sobs. "It's okay. I'll be okay. Things can only get better from here."

And that they did.

My bed was moved to my sister's room, which was now called the girls' room. The closet eventually got very full of my clothes. *Good* clothes.

Per the endocrinologist I ended up seeing, my puberty was successfully blocked, until, years later, it was replaced with the feminine version, and years after that — just before I entered adulthood, in fact — the last remnants of my dysphoria were removed, something I hadn't even managed on my first time through.

In other words, on my second attempt through childhood, I became myself — myself in the truest sense of the word, myself in more ways than I'd ever thought possible. For the first time I could remember, I was truly, completely, and totally comfortable.

And after that all I needed was to find my friends from before once more, and my girlfriend, and do it all again. The second time, it would be easy. I was basically cheating.