

I once had a very weird wish: being a boy. It is not so much a sexual orientation as a crazy personal preference, just as some girls wish they were prettier, or some boys more handsome.

When I was a child, I liked beautiful dolls and dresses just like any other girls. I even had a girls' typical bad habit: crying. Sad movies: cry. Tragic stories: cry. Being teased or scolded: cry. My childhood seemed flooded with tears. In my defense, my tears fell down so quickly that I could barely hold them back. The funny thing was, the weepier I was, the more people laughed at me, and the more they made fun of me, the more I cried. It was a vicious circle in which I, the crying baby, was trapped. Femininity must be the culprit, I thought with rage. Boys don't cry, only girls do. Why wasn't I born a boy? After all, I had no proper quality for a girl. My grandmother had to buy plastic bowls and glasses, as I had broken half of the porcelain ones. My mother had to store a number of bandages and other first-aid medicines, since I usually returned home with a bleeding knee or a scratched elbow. I was unbelievably clumsy, never being able to act gracefully as a girl should. One time when watching my struggling with the sewing assignment in elementary school, my mother grumbled: "What a girl. You should have been a boy instead."

That was so right. Perhaps I was never meant to be a girl. Perhaps I should change my gender in order to get rid of the crying and be free to break things. In grade 6, I cut off mercilessly my glossy long hair. Looking so much like a boy, I was nicknamed: "boy in disguise." With the new identity, I eagerly tried to get on with the boys by playing their games and imitating their behaviors. Being with them was so fun, because they were simple and easygoing. Being with them, I was able to get rid of my girlish sullenness and

complication, but not tearfulness. When tears were about to fall, the only thing for me to do was to sneak away. Why I just couldn't be a "real boy"? Boys are tough. Boys are cool. Boys can keep their eyes dry. However, "what you see is not necessarily what you get." Not crying is a duty rather than ability. Because they were boys, they were only excused for clumsiness, not tearfulness. One of my male friends had to transfer to another school to run away from teases after being seen sobbing. The incident smashed my gender ideal into pieces, revealing its true form: childish overgeneralization. Not all boys are able to actually fight back their tears. To live up to gender stereotypes, by some means or other some have either practiced until their lachrymal gland goes numb, or tried to hide the way I did. Bitter as it might sound, femininity or masculinity or whatever is obviously not the answer to my "hydro-abnormality".

Disappointed, finally I complied with my natural gender, but in a more flexible way. I started learning cooking and sewing, but keep my hair short and my clothes plain. I am still very boy-like straightforward, yet I try to be more tactful. Above all, I have done a "research" into ways of suppressing anger, sadness, or anything that can bring tears into my eyes. Some successful methods are taking a deep breath (common enough), biting a thumb (so that the pain will remind me of the "dry-eyes goal"), or thinking about my favorite movies and animes. At present I am experimenting on a new method: imagining what would happen if I cried. All that tears could do is make my eyes swollen, my nose congested, and me tired (crying needs much energy). This method is quite effective, as I slowly realize by crying I am just dehydrating myself and not solving anything. Maybe crying is just a wasteful, rather than shameful, habit, and is a privilege of neither gender.

Now my family is using porcelain bowls again, and the scars on my knees have all gone. When my mother is away, I am able to cook a simple meal for myself and to watch a sad movie alone without bursting into tears. Besides, my friends often ask me for help when they fall out with their boyfriends or girlfriends, as I can talk to both sides easily. After all, having a gender complex is not very useless.