

"I WISH I COULD TELL YOU"

Written by

Julie Ramona Tjalas

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - DAY

CLOSE UP -- A butterfly is just starting to break free from its pupa, as birds chirp in the background.

MARY, a cute 19 year old trans girl, is sitting on a park bench. She's reading a book, as kids play and a couple is having a picnic.

Then, Mary notices, BETSY, Mary's great grandma who she hasn't seen since long before her transition, walking through the park.

Mary is startled by her at first, but then calms down after she realizes that the Betsy doesn't recognize her.

Betsy sits down next to Mary. She notices that she looks rather melancholic. The girl debates on what to do, looking back and forth at the lady and her book.

She takes a deep breath, shakes her head, and picks up her book, and buries herself in it. She tries to hold back her emotional cocktail of fear, joy, anxiety, and sorrow. Her eyes scan the pages, picking up none of the prose. Betsy turns to face Mary.

BETSY

You know, my husband proposed to me
in this park.

CLOSE UP -- A Shot of Betsy's crucifix necklace.

Mary is caught off guard, and begins to calm down. She lowers her book as Betsy sighs.

BETSY (CONT'D)

I don't know why I do this to
myself frankly.

She sniffs and looks back to the lake.

MARY

Do what?

BETSY

Torture myself with his memory. He
and I would always go on walks
every Sunday after church.

MARY

That sounds really nice.

BETSY

Oh yes, and he was such a romantic. He'd surprise me with flowers. The ole sap. I love him so.

Mary pauses to think about her word choice.

MARY

Reminds me of my grandparents.

BETSY

Oh really?

MARY

Yeah, my great grandpa was in the air force, and whenever he came home, he'd take my great grandma to his favorite park.

BETSY

What a small world darling. Do you think they teach that in the air force?

Betsy chuckles, Mary joins in.

BETSY (CONT'D)

He'd take our great grandkids to this park too. Oh, and he was so awful, he'd give the children bread to feed the ducks. I always told him not to, but he never listened. He loved the smiles on all their faces too much.

Beat.

MARY

What happened to him?

A look of genuine curiosity paints her face. She never knew the details.

BETSY

God said it was his time. The doctors tried to save him from the heart attack, but he was 86. I wasn't too terribly surprised, I knew those cigars were gonna get him one day. Still, it hurts dearly. I wouldn't mind it so much if my grandsons would at least call me from time to time.

Betsy starts gesturing, not really looking at anything.

BETSY (CONT'D)

One of the boys is off in college, the other starting a business, and I just plain old haven't heard from my last one. Oh little Mark was so sweet when he was young.

Hearing the name Mark subtly pains Mary's face, but she makes sure it doesn't last.

MARY

Well, I know adult life is busier than I thought it'd be. No one really tells you how hard it's going to be. Everything is so new, it's like starting from scratch.

BETSY

Oh, how old are you?

MARY

I'm 19.

Betsy laughs.

BETSY

Oh dear, I remember when I first entered the world at your age. Gosh how long ago was that? 44? 45? Quite frankly, I don't want to remember.

She laughs.

BETSY (CONT'D)

I don't want to feel that old. But I remember wanting to work like my older sister. Though, the world you're entering is crazy now with all this technology... and everything really. It's like we're living in Star Wars. Say, what's your name?

MARY

Mary, what's yours?

The two of them shake hands.

BETSY

Betsy, Betsy Bacall. So what brings you to the park today. The weather?

MARY

I just wanted to go someplace quiet. Peaceful. I needed to get out of my own head. Needed a place to read, you know? Plus I used to come here as a kid.

BETSY

Oh, what were you reading?

MARY

You probably wouldn't have heard of it. It's called 'If I Was Your Girl'.

BETSY

Sounds like one of those romance novels I used to read. What's it about?

Mary pauses for a moment, and looks out at the pond, being mindful of her word choice.

MARY

A girl who wants to be herself, but has to keep a secret to fit in.

BETSY

Fitting in is over rated. You know, shortly after I started working, they wanted us to go home after the war was over. But I wanted to work. Not in a kitchen, but in the factory. It was fun!

She sighs.

BETSY (CONT'D)

So many prudes back then. At least things have changed somewhat for the better now.

Mary looks off into the lake.

MARY

I mean, they're always some group of people that are being put down or held back.

BETSY

Unfortunately, but I believe we'll always get through it and make life better for everyone.

Mary turns her head toward her.

MARY

You really think it will?

BETSY

Well, most everyone. I've seen the world change a lot darling. Things may be rough now, and may even get worse tomorrow, but in the long run, they get better for the right people. After each night of darkness, there's always some sunshine.

MARY

Yeah. It's kinda reassuring really, that time does heal all wounds.

They sit quietly, taking the moment in.

BETSY

Why reassuring to you?

Mary looks mildly concerned but chooses her words carefully.

MARY

Well, I have a lot of queer friends. Some of them were kicked out and disowned by family. I know my folks haven't been the kindest since... I came out as-

Mary thinks for a moment and breathes.

MARY (CONT'D)

A lesbian.

BETSY

You're gay? Aren't you worried what people think about living that kind of lifestyle?

Beat.

MARY

I wouldn't really call it a lifestyle. I'm just... me, and sure I worry about coming out to some folks, and others just plain old can't know anything about my identity.

BETSY

Why's that?

MARY

It's safer. That doesn't mean the solitude doesn't hurt though. I'm still waiting for time to heal that, but I'm afraid it never will.

BETSY

Sometimes old scars never go, but that doesn't mean that there aren't good things now that you won't miss. Nostalgia can toy with your emotions, but you need to accentuate the positive now. That's how I get by darling.

MARY

Sometimes, I feel like I'm constantly looking back at the good times and looking forward to the future for better days.

BETSY

Already?

The Betsy chuckles.

MARY

Yeah... Going from the simple and stressful life of school to the complex and more stressful adult world is...

Mary sighs.

BETSY

Quite the transition huh?

Mary's eyes widen, but then return to normal. She pauses before she speaks.

MARY

Yeah... that's one way to put it.

The two sit in a comfortable silence.

BETSY

Well, it was lovely talking with you Mary, but I'm afraid I must be going.

Betsy begins to grab her things and starts to walk away.

MARY

It was nice seeing you.

BETSY

It was nice meeting you too deer.

Once Betsey has walked out of ear-shot, Mary sighs and speaks to herself.

MARY

I just wish I could tell you... I miss you so much grandma.

FADE OUT.

THE END